

**Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto – ANT7001H-S
Medical Anthropology**

Course Instructor: Dr. Laura Sikstrom

Class Meetings: Thursdays, 1-4pm

Location: On zoom (in person options to be discussed)

E-mail: laura.sikstrom@utoronto.ca

Office hours: by prior appointment

Course Description:

This course explores contemporary work in the field of medical anthropology. Our purpose is to gain a broad understanding of some major directions in the field, the better to formulate our own projects and views.

Medical anthropologists produce understanding of health, illness, treatment and care by situating them in sociocultural context. Within this broad consensus, however, how medical anthropologists delineate, document, and describe the relevant contexts may vary greatly – as do the insights achieved, the audiences addressed, and the styles of presentation adopted. Readings have been selected to showcase many different directions taken in current scholarship. While exploring the conceptual, methodological, and topical differences among work being pursued in different areas of medical anthropology, we shall also attend to common commitments and concerns that are broadly shared in the field.

Required Texts:

The following required texts are all available at the U of T library. “Recommended” readings (not required) will be added as we proceed and based on our discussions; you may wish to read some of these for your final paper, or for your own interest.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Course Engagement	→	35%
Peer Review + Commentary		
Position Piece Comments (6 responses)		
Course Facilitation (dates TBD)		
Self-Assessments (Feb 17 and April 7)		
Position Pieces (6x5% each, multiple due dates)	→	30%

Final Paper (April 18 at 11:59 via Q)

→

35%

Abstract (Feb 18)

Outline (March 4)

First draft (April 1)

Course Assignments Detail and Deadlines:

1. Position Pieces (6x5% each) - 30%, 300-400 words each, due dates variable

Position pieces are your intellectual responses to the readings assigned during a specific week. They are called position pieces because they require you to take a stance on a dimension of the readings. It is not enough to summarize the readings for that week. These are meant to help you develop curiosities and ideas relating to the readings.

They will be 300-400 words long and will be posted on the weekly discussion boards by **Noon on Tuesday** two days before we meet. This gives students enough time to formulate their responses prior to class. **No late position pieces will be accepted.** Your classmates who will serve as facilitators (see below) need time to read these essays; be thoughtful of each other and submit these on time. Please address each reading response to one of the following very general prompts (and indicate which one):

Close Reading: Identify a passage from one of the readings that strikes you as providing a particularly important or interesting entry point, and discuss how this passage illuminates (or complicates, or contradicts, or otherwise informs our understanding of) the author's overall argument. **Crosstalk:** How do these various writings speak to each other – or past each other? How might we bring them into conversation with each other, if they were not already written that way? Bring together any two readings we have considered thus far. You may for example identify what seem to be lines of influence, or situate works within a theoretical debate, or draw connections and make comparisons at the level of method, writing style, etc. **Context:** How does the particular work on which you are commenting bear traces of the social context of its production (i.e., the identity and social location of the researcher and/or subjects, or the particular setting of the research)? How readily does this analysis travel, and what forms of "tinkering" (if any) are needed to render it useful in a different setting? **Conduct:** What insights or provocations does the work on which you are commenting offer, about the conduct of ethnographic research? And/or about practices of reading, writing, discussion and teaching that comprise the everyday conduct of anthropology in most academic settings?

2. Course Engagement – 35%

As a graduate seminar coming to class prepared with something to discuss is key to the success of this class. A number of activities will be used to evaluate your course engagement:

Position Piece Commentary (6 weeks): You are responsible for replying to the position pieces at least 6 weeks this term. These can be brief questions: “Can you tell me more about X” or a reflection on your classmates writing. They are meant to start the conversation before class. You may respond to any posts between Weeks 2-Week 11.

In Class Attendance and Participation: As a graduate seminar this class emphasizes active learning through discussion, and every member of the class is responsible to join in the collective work of building a conversation with the scholarly work we will be exploring together. You are expected to come to each class session having prepared the day's assignments in advance, and to participate actively. Be there, be prepared, be engaged, and be respectful of everyone. Taking part in the identification and selection of journal articles for week 11 will count as part of your participation.

It is not enough to show up for class. You need to demonstrate your engagement with the readings and the ideas and discussion points presented by your peers on our class discussion board. This does not mean you need to talk all the time (a shout out to my fellow introverts!), but it does mean that staying silent is not an option. This is an opportunity for you to develop your oral communication skills. This is a skill that is important in work and in life.

I recognize that everyone will participate differently and together in one-on-one conference portfolio sessions (see below) we will assess the quality of your contribution. For the purposes of assessment we will define the quality of your class participation as follows: coming to class prepared, asking questions of your peers, engaging in discussion with your peers, staying on topic, engaging with the readings, and demonstrating improvement in all of these areas over the course of the term.

Class facilitation: Twice during the semester, you will be asked to facilitate our class discussion. On that day, in addition to the assigned readings you will be asked to read the reading responses submitted for that day by your classmates (as noted, these are to be submitted by Tuesday noon). If there are more than one facilitator on a given day, please discuss and coordinate as you prepare. Come prepared with some written notes, and present short (~5 minutes) verbal comments, in which you help jumpstart discussion by sharing your observations about points of convergence and/or difference among the reading responses, your comments on how these build upon or redirect our collective conversation, as well as any additional comments or questions you would like to offer about the week's readings.

Conference Portfolio Sessions: Your participation in this course will be assessed in person with me in two conference portfolio sessions. What is a conference portfolio session? A conference

portfolio session is a one-on-one 15 minute meeting with me scheduled twice per term (once during Week 6 and the second following Week 12). During these sessions we will meet to discuss your class “portfolio”. Your portfolio includes your class notes, discussion posts, in-class participation, and so on.

In the first session we will talk about your participation and development so far and identify areas you would like to work on. In the final session we will revisit this discussion and identify areas where you showed a lot of growth and areas that would benefit from some improvement. Together we will determine your final course engagement grade. A rubric is included under course materials.

Peer Review Comments (a component of your final papers). You will be assigned as “reviewer” for the preliminary draft one of your fellow student's essays, upon which you will be expected to comment in depth. Comments should address both the style and the content of the essay. Your comments are to be constructive and critical: What do you appreciate about the paper? Do you see specific ways it can be improved? Write up your comments, which should be no more than two pages and no less than one page in length (double-spaced). Submit a copy of your comments via Quercus before class March 8, and e-mail a copy to the author of the paper.

3. **Final Paper** (35% total, each stage is required):

Each student will be required to write a 12-15 page essay on a topic of their own choice (or 7000 words, not including references, which is the standard article length for anthropology journals). This essay will not be written the night before it is due! The following is the schedule of assignments each student must meet. I will provide comments within a few days, at each stage, and am available for discussion in office hours or by appointment as well:

Abstract. Due Feb 18 via Quercus. The abstract is a short paragraph (about 250 words) describing the paper that you will write. It should address each of three distinct points, as best you are able:

- 1) briefly characterize the argument. (For example, “In this essay I argue that....”).
- 2) indicate what sort of evidence will be used to support the argument. In this case, indicate which articles or books you will be using. (For example, “To support this argument I draw upon...”).
- 3) suggest what implications your argument may have for broader questions and debates. (For example, “This reading challenges accepted understandings of...” or “This argument illustrates

the value of XYZ approach in the study of..." or "This argument suggests XYZ directions for future research..." etc)

Outline. Due March 4, via Quercus. Turn in a complete outline of your paper. This should include major points you expect to argue, and indicate (in a bibliography) sources you expect to draw upon to support or illustrate your points. These sources should include course readings.

Preliminary Draft. Due April 1, via Quercus. This must be a complete draft of your paper, with all sections written, including bibliographic citations. Include your abstract (revised if necessary) along with your paper. About 15 double-spaced pages is a good target for length.

Discussion of Papers: The final class meeting will be devoted to presentations and discussion of your papers. Each author will give a five minute presentation, which might focus on one or two key points. The assigned peer reviewer will then give a five-ten minute response (depending on class enrollment), addressing the points raised by the author's presentation or some other interesting aspect of the paper. There will be time for questions, comments and suggestions from other students. The goal is to provide constructive feedback.

Final Draft. Due via Quercus April 18. In your final draft I expect you to revise your essay in light of all the comments (both regarding style and content) you received. Of course, you are not restricted to these comments alone. In the two weeks between handing in the preliminary and final draft, you will hopefully be thinking yourself about how to improve the final product. Grading of the final draft will be based on both the quality of the completed work and also the extent to which you have improved the rough draft.

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

University policies about plagiarism and cheating will be strictly enforced and I will conduct electronic searches for evidence of plagiarism. Penalties can be very severe including a class fail, and expulsion. Please familiarize yourself with university policies:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/academicoffenses.html>

For tips on how to reference properly, paraphrase ideas and direct quotations refer to these writing guidelines:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Email

Please put ANT7001 in the subject heading of all your emails so that I can respond promptly. Unless otherwise announced, I should be able to respond to your emails within 48 hours (not including weekends). Serious matters, however, are best discussed with me in person during my office hours or by prior appointment.

Late assignments policy

All late assignments will have 2% of the final grade deducted for each day late including weekends. Exceptions may be made only with prior approval from me or in the case of personal or family illnesses and emergencies.

Accessibility Services

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration/personal problem that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services Office as soon as possible. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Jan 9) - Introduction: Core concepts

** these readings are not mandatory but if you have no background in medical anthropology it would be a good place to start**

Baer et al. (2003)– Medical Anthropology: Central Concepts and Developments. *Medical Anthropology and the World System* (p.3-19)

“Introduction – Setting the Stage: Historical Antecedents to Contemporary Medical Anthropology.” 2010. In Byron J. Good, Michael M.J. Fischer, Sarah S. Willen, and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, ed. *A Reader in Medical Anthropology*. Malden, MA: Wiley. Pp 9-14

Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 2010 [1937] “The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events.” In Byron J. Good, Michael M.J. Fischer, Sarah S. Willen, and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, ed. *A Reader in Medical Anthropology*. Malden, MA: Wiley. Pp 18-25

Turner, Victor. 2010 [1970]. “Muchona the Hornet, Interpreter of Religion.” In Byron J. Good, Michael M.J. Fischer, Sarah S. Willen, and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, ed. *A Reader in Medical Anthropology*. Malden, MA: Wiley. Pp 26-37.

Virchow, Rudolf. 2010 [1879]. “The Charity Physician.” In Byron J. Good, Michael M.J. Fischer, Sarah S. Willen, and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, ed. *A Reader in Medical Anthropology*. Malden, MA: Wiley. Pp 47-49.

Mkhwana, Nolwazi. 2016. “Medical Anthropology in Africa: The Trouble with a Single Story.” *Medical Anthropology* 35(2):193:202.

Scheper-Hughes. 1998. The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology, pp. 208-221.

Moerman, D. 2002. Deconstructing the placebo effect and finding the meaning response. *Annals of internal medicine*, (136(6): 471-476.

Finkler (1994), Sacred Healing and Biomedicine Compared. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 8(2):178-197.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. 1977. The Sorcerer and His Magic. *Culture, Disease and Healing*, p.445-453.

Davenport, B. 2000. Witnessing and the medical gaze: how medical students learn to see at a free clinic for the homeless. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 14(3): 310-327.

Good, B. 1994. How medicine constructs its objects, p. 65-87.

Farmer, Paul 2005. On Suffering and Structural Violence, Pp. 29-50.

Csordas and Kleinman. *The Therapeutic Process*.

Kleinman, A. 1988. The meaning of symptoms and disorders. In *The Illness Narratives*, pp. 3-24.

Izquierdo, C. 2005. When "health" is not enough: societal, individual and biomedical assessments of well-being among the Matsigenka of the Peruvian Amazon. *Social, Science and Medicine*, 61L 767-783.

Part I: Illness in Social Context

Week 2 (Jan 16) – Health and Healing

Anita Hannig. 2017. *Beyond Surgery*. U Chicago Press.

Week 3 (Jan 23) – Care & Caregiving

Jean Hunleth. *Children as caregivers: The Global Fight Against TB and HIV in Zambia*. Rutgers University Press.

Week 4 (Jan 30) – Interspecies Camaraderie

Nadal, D. 2020. *Rabies in the Streets: Interspecies Camaraderie in Urban India*. The Pennsylvania University State Press.

Week 5 (Feb 6) – Colonial Legacies

TBD

Week 6 (Feb 13) – Social Suffering, Addiction and the State

Carroll, Jennifer. 2019. *Narkomania: Drugs, HIV, and Citizenship in Ukraine*. Ithaca: University of Cornell Press.

***** READING BREAK*****

Part II: Anthropology in/of Institutions

Week 7 (Feb 27) – Institutional Ethnography

Paul E. Brodwin. 2013. *Everyday Ethics: Voices from the Frontline of Community Psychiatry*. U California Press.

Week 8 (March 6) – Biomedical Odysseys

Song, P. 2017. *Biomedical Odysseys. Fetal Cell Experiments From Cyberspace to China*. Princeton University Press.

Week 9 (March 13) – Medical Racism, Precision Medicine

Fullwiley, D. *Tabula Rasa: Mapping Race and Human Diversity in American Genome Science*. U California Press.

Week 10 (March 20) – Medico-Legal Entanglements

Stefan Timmermans. 2006. *Post-mortem: How Medical Examiners Explain Suspicious Deaths*. U Chicago Press.

Week 11 (March 27) – Special Issues – Journals

While most of our readings have focused on books, journals play a critically important role in sharing research and shaping the field. For this final week, we will read articles in a special issue published by one of the leading medical anthropology journals, to be selected collectively in advance. (Some possible journals: *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*; *Culture, Medicine & Psychiatry*; *Medical Anthropology*; *Anthropology and Medicine*; *Social Science & Medicine*; *Medicine Anthropology Theory*; *Sociology of Health & Illness*)

Week 12 (April 3 OR April 10)– Paper Conference

****FINAL PAPERS DUE APRIL 18****