

**Anthropology 4200.001 - Spring 2012**  
**INTRODUCTION TO MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**  
**MW 10:00 -11:20 PM, Business Leadership Building 060**

Instructor: Beverly Ann Davenport, PhD, MSPH  
Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursdays, 11:30AM - 12:30 PM or by appointment  
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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an introduction to a vast subfield within anthropology – medical anthropology. It will emphasize the socio-cultural aspects of medical anthropology. I will introduce you to the some of the key thinkers, their contributions to theory, and the major debates in the field. I expect you to begin to learn the vocabulary of medical anthropology. Some terms are familiar sounding, but they are used differently in this context. Some terms are unique to medical anthropology. Key concepts and vocabulary are among the most important things you can learn at the beginning of studying a new field. They are signposts that you can use to help you find your way through the new landscape of knowledge.

*Disclaimer: This course is not comprehensive; it is a slice of a huge pie. The idea is to whet your appetite so that you will come back for seconds.*

### **REQUIRED READINGS:**

Martha Balshem (1993). *Cancer in the Community: Class and Medical Authority*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press

Donald Joralemon (2010). *Exploring Medical Anthropology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Boston: Prentice Hall.

Marsha B. Quinlan (2004). *From the Bush: The Front Line of Health Care in a Caribbean Village*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

**All articles in the syllabus are required.** They will be available through two resources:

1. UNT Electronic Resources, accessed through Willis Library Catalog, <http://iii.library.unt.edu/> These readings will be labeled “online” in the syllabus. Please go through the Willis system to access online versions of the journals that these articles are in. I cannot be held responsible for what you find if you surf the web instead.
2. Blackboard Learn. These readings will be labeled “Reading assignments – other.” The course has a Blackboard Learn page that I urge you to visit often. In addition to required posted readings, other items will be posted there that will be of interest to those studying any aspect of medical anthropology

## COURSE OBJECTIVES – YOUR DEVELOPMENT AS SCHOLARS

**Overview:** I want you to learn how to think critically about the material that you are studying, especially what you are reading. It is not holy writ; these are ideas that can be challenged but which must be challenged thoughtfully. Your feelings matter here, but your feelings must be backed up by your thoughts. It is OK to “not like” or “like” something, that’s the beginning of being interested in an idea. But you have to make yourself go a little bit deeper and explain to yourself (and occasionally to me) WHY you like or don’t like something by creating an intellectual framework for your ideas. How does what you are reading relate to something else you have been thinking about?

### By the end of the course I expect that:

- 1) Every one of **you will have participated in class** to the extent possible in a class this size. I want to hear a comment from every student at least once during class sessions and will try to find ways to make it possible for everyone to feel comfortable in speaking in class.
- 2) You will have become more comfortable with **reading books and journal articles** for class-based reading assignments. You will **learn how to read these actively**, asking questions and making connections to other sources of information, building on your existing knowledge.
- 3) You will have become **familiar with the major medical anthropology journals**. You will learn how to look up articles, find them in the library and critically evaluate them and relate them to other material you are reading in the class.
- 4) You will have become **comfortable with regular writing** assignments. There will be a lot of writing in the class, and step by step assignments along the way to the final paper because my goal here is to demystify the writing experience.

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Students are advised to come to every class.** Attendance, per se, will not be graded, but your learning depends on listening to, if not participating in, class discussion. In addition, there will be random in-class writing exercises for which there will be no second chances.

### CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

This is a big class but I would like to incorporate discussion to the extent possible. In order for discussions to be most useful, I expect you to have completed the reading assignments BEFORE class.

I encourage you to ask questions and make comments, or email me questions (if that makes you more comfortable) which I will address at the next available class time. There is no such thing as a stupid question. *The only thing that is stupid is NOT TO ASK a question when you have one.*

During classroom discussions, I want to get to know you, so I ask you to remember as much as possible to say your name (at least for the first month or so) before you start in on your comment. Also, I would like you to TALK TO EACH OTHER – not just to me. There will be more to say on this topic as the semester proceeds.

**Cell phones, pagers, text messaging systems must be OFF during class. No exceptions.**

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Exams:**

There will be both a midterm and final examination. **The midterm will take place in class on Wednesday, March 8. The final is scheduled for 8:00 AM, on Monday, May 7.** The format will be short answer and essay questions, with material coming from assigned readings, class discussion and class lectures. The final will be comprehensive, but will stress materials from the second half of the course.

### **Writing Assignments:**

- 1) **In Class Exercises** – These will be random surprises! ☺ By this I mean, either short writing activities during class time or short writing assignments HANDED OUT in class usually due for the next class. You will be graded on the best 5 out of ??? That means you can miss a class or two and still not jeopardize your A, but you don't want to miss too many of these as there will be NO MAKE-UPS. For the writing assignments handed out in class due in the near future, I will post the assignment on our Blackboard Learn page. It is YOUR responsibility to check Blackboard Learn if you miss class.
- 2) **A critical abstract** of an article from the medical anthropology literature. The article you select must have been published between 2006 and 2012 (no earlier). Articles must be selected from one of the following journals:

*Medical Anthropology Quarterly  
Social Science and Medicine  
Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry  
Medical Anthropology  
Anthropology and Medicine  
Sociology of Health and Illness*

The article you select must report on *original research*. Do not write an abstract on a “review article.” If you are not sure of your selection, check with me first. You will write 750-1000 words (maximum 4 double spaced pages) of analysis. I will provide more instructions about this assignment in a separate handout. **This is due Friday, April 1 by 5 PM.**

- 3) **Final paper -- a critical review of a book-length medical anthropology ethnography.** Suggested length is 6-10 pages. I will provide a list of suggested ethnographies and more

details on this assignment in class as a separate handout. **This is due Friday, May 4, by 5 PM.**

## **STUDENT EVALUATION**

### **Various course components are worth the following points:**

In-class exercises (20 pts.@):	100
Critical Abstract:	150
Final Paper:	250
(this includes 25 pts for proving that you have the book by March 11)	
Midterm:	250
Final Examination:	250
<b>Total Possible Points</b>	<b>1000</b>

**Grading:** 900 points or more = A, etc.

## **DETAILED COURSE PLAN (A ROAD MAP):**

### **I. WHAT IS MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY?**

#### **Week 1: Wednesday, January 18**

- ❖ Introduction to course and each other

#### **Week 2: January 23, 25**

- ❖ Joralemon, Chapters 1 and 2

#### **Week 3: January 30, February 1**

- ❖ Joralemon, Chapters 3 and 4

### **II. CASE STUDY – ETHNOMEDICINE IN DOMINICA**

#### **Week 4: February 6, 8**

- ❖ Quinlan, *From the Bush*, Chapters 1-4

#### **Week 5: February 13, 15**

- ❖ Quinlan, Chapter 5

- ❖ Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1976 [1932], Introduction (by Eva Gillies), pp. vii-xxix AND Chapter 2, "The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events," pp. 18-32. *IN Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*, Blackboard Learn folder

#### **Week 6: February 20, 22**

- ❖ Quinlan, Chapter 6
- More readings, next page ...*

- ❖ Kleinman, Arthur (1980), pp. 71-118, *Patients and Healers in the Context of Culture*. **Read pp. 104-118 carefully, Blackboard Learn folder.**
- ❖ Joralemon, Chapter 6

### **Week 7: February 27, 29**

- ❖ Quinlan, Chapters 7-9
- ❖ Nichter, Mark, (1985) Drink Boiled Water: A Cultural Analysis of a Health Education Message. *Social Science and Medicine* 21(6):667-669, *Blackboard Learn folder*

### **Week 8: March 5, 7**

Review material covered so far, come to class on Monday with your questions

*By the end of this week (Friday March 9), you must prove you have a physical copy of the book you plan on doing your final paper on – you may bring it to class, to my office hours or whatever, but you won't receive the 25 points if you don't show me a physical copy of the book.*

### **MIDTERM EXAMINATION - Wednesday, March 7**

### **III. AMERICAN HEALTH CARE – THE HIGHS AND THE LOWS**

#### **Week 9: March 12, 14**

- ❖ Gawande, Atul (2009). "The Cost Conundrum: Expensive Health Care Can Be Harmful," *The New Yorker*, June 1, online.
- ❖ Miewald, Christiana (1997). "Is Awareness Enough? The Contradictions of Self-Care in A Chronic Disease Clinic." *Human Organization* 56(3):353-363 online

SPRING BREAK – No classes on March 19 and March 21

### **IV. CASE STUDY – CANCER IN THE COMMUNITY**

#### **Week 10: March 26, 28**

- ❖ Balshem, Chapters 1 and 2

*Critical abstract due Wednesday, March 28 by 5:00 PM*

#### **Week 11: April 4, 6**

- ❖ Balshem, Chapters 3 and 4
- ❖ Davenport, Beverly A. (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, online.

**Week 12: April 11, 13**

- ❖ Balshem, Chapters 5 and 6
- ❖ Harper, Janice (2004). "Breathless in Houston: A Political Ecology of Health Approach to Understanding Environmental Health Concerns." *Medical Anthropology* 23:295-326, online.

**V. EMBODIMENT AND EXPERIENCE****Week 13: April 18, 20**

- ❖ Henry, Doug (2006) Violence and the Body: Somatic Expressions of Trauma and Vulnerability during War. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 20 (3):345-378, online.
- ❖ Wilce, James M., and Laurie J. Price (2003). "Metaphors our bodyminds live by" IN *The Social and Cultural Lives of Immune Systems*, James Wilce, ed., pp. 50-80. London: Routledge, *Blackboard Learn folder*

**VI. MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND MEDICAL ETHICS****Week 14: April 25, 27**

- ❖ Joralemon, Chapter 8
- ❖ Lepore, Jill, "The Politics of Death," *The New Yorker*, November 30, 2009, online.

**Week 15: May 2, 4**

- ❖ Farmer, Paul (2005). Chapter 8 "New Malaise: Medical Ethics and Social Rights in the Global Era" IN *Pathologies of Power: Health , Human Rights, and the War on the Poor*, pp. 196-212. Berkeley: University of California Press *Blackboard Learn folder*.

**FINAL PAPER due Friday, May 4, by 5:00 PM**

**FINAL EXAM, Monday, May 7 in WOOTEN 110 AT 8:00 AM**