

Introduction to Medical Anthropology

Spring 2002

Sarah Orndorff
Department of Anthropology
Purchase College
Social Sciences Bldg, Room 2020
914 251 6018

Sarah.Orndorff@Purchase.edu

Office Hrs: M, W 5:30 - 6:30 and by appointment

Class meeting times:
M, W 9:00 - 10:20 am
Dance Bldg
Basement Rm 128

Overview

Medical Anthropology arguably formed around the middle of the 20th century and was a fairly unique contribution by the Americans to the international exercise of anthropology which had its origins in European colonialism (particularly British and French).

With American social upheaval, anthropology as a discipline joined the push to 'question authority' and to critically analyze its own practices. Indelibly inked by the hand of third world development, the ethnography was often the by product of 'improvement' projects aimed to "help those less fortunate". But the post-war era brought a lens of self-reflexiveness through which the ethnography was to be transformed. No longer was the ethnocentrism of the anthropologist tolerated so easily. In the case of medical anthropology, the shift was clear. One could no longer simply attempt to understand diabetes in Kenya or Down's Syndrome in Thailand. The application of Euro-Western biomedical categories onto places and peoples outside this small fraction of the globe, was no longer logical or appropriate. Instead, health and well-being or ill health and sickness, as they are defined differently around the world have become a focus for the medical anthropologist.

And those biomedical categories within the Euro-Western regions, for so long taken for granted, have become increasingly scrutinized.

Therefore, this course will be organized into several overlapping conceptual foci. One critically analyzes Western biomedical categories, aiming to understand the prejudices and biases which inform them. Another discusses larger health issues. In this second section, we consider global categories of disease which illuminate the undeniable link between social and individual ills. We also examine the health-related controversies produced in the aftermath of man-made catastrophes. The third attempts to understand how curing individuals may also contribute to "curing" societies. Yet curing takes many forms. We end with some attention to the idea of bioethics.

Goals

This course is about READING,
UNDERSTANDING and
EXPRESSING.

Therefore, we will read different kinds of authors, with different tempos, different levels of complexity, and different approaches to their subjects within the context of medical anthropology.

READ

You will be expected to do the readings, if need be rereading will be emphasized.

UNDERSTAND

Focus on understanding the larger arguments put forth by the authors. This is not a course about memorizing definitions or formulas so make sure to take the time to read, reread, and reread again your assignments if you don't know what the author is saying. You don't have to know the piece verbatim but you should be able to relate its argument. Taking extra time to reread the piece a second or even third time will allow you to follow where the author is going and conceptualize the path as a whole.

EXPRESS

Understanding a reading on your own is only part of the learning process. What good is all that information crammed into one person's mind if it is not shared with others? Discussing with others helps us all to form clearer ideas and explore differing opinions about a reading. Therefore you will be expected to participate in class on a regular basis. To facilitate this, we will have regular presentations and reviews of all discussions.

Grading

You will be graded on the following scale:

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| A) | Attendance/Participation | 20% |
| B) | Presentations (1-2 pgs ea)
[1) summarize one set of readings, 2) review one day's discussion, 3) present your Final Paper proposal at midsemester] | 30% |
| C) | Ethnography Project and its presentation (2-4 pgs) | 20% |
| D) | Final Paper (8-10 pgs) | 30% |

Attendance will be taken and your participation will be recorded at each course meeting.

Presentations will consist of three different types. 1) You will be expected to summarize one set of reading and present it to the class. This should be a one to two page summary and you will be expected to provide copies of your summary and read this or otherwise verbally present your argument to the group, budgeting ten to fifteen minutes to do so. We will set up a schedule of these presentations in the first few weeks of the course. 2) You will be expected to summarize the discussion of one class meeting. This should also be a one to two page summary which will be handed out and presented to the class. This will provide a review of the previous class's discussion and allow us to extend the highlights of that discussion further in the following class, time permitting. And 3) at the halfway point in the semester, you will be expected to discuss the proposal of your Final Paper with the group, again budgeting ten to fifteen for your presentation. We will schedule proposal presentations in the first few weeks of the course.

Projects will be to explore health/illness paradigms. This will be a brief ethnographic exercise which will involve interviewing and an analysis of findings (these are the foundations of anthropology): You will be expected to gather demographic information on ten interviewees, formulate ten questions relating to some health or illness category you want to explore, administer those questions to your interviewees, record the answers given, then summarize your project. This should be a two to four page summary which will be presented to the group. We will schedule these presentations toward the end of the semester. You are encouraged to use this exercise to inform your Final Paper.

The *Final Paper* is due on the last day of the course. Since we will be discussing paper proposals midway through the semester and will be doing mini-ethnographic exercises which will inform the Final Papers, the Papers are intended to summarize your work for the semester. Papers should be ten to twelve pages long and again should concern the exploration of a particular health/illness category. Though course readings should provide a cornerstone to your research, outside readings are necessary as well. But importance will be placed on the coherence and logic of an argument in your paper rather than a long list of bibliographic references. Papers should be paginated, stapled, and have a cover page with paper title, your name, course title, instructor name, and semester. Papers should be 12 pt font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins. If you are unable to make use of a computer, your handwriting must be easily legible, and page lengths appropriately adjusted.

Absences: More than four absences will constitute failure of the course.

Ethics: Plagiarism will constitute failure of the course. Further disciplinary action may also be taken.

Classroom Etiquette: Be on time. No cell phones, beepers, food. Please bring the assigned readings to class.

Office Hours: You are expected to come to office hours at least three times. Once to discuss your paper proposal well before midsemester, once to discuss your ethnography project, and once more to discuss the progress of your Final Paper well before the end of the semester. It is important to communicate your plans with me.

Schedule of Readings:

Mon, Jan 20 No class - holiday

Wed, Jan 22 First class meeting. Check roster, go over syllabus, fill out Student Data Sheet

Mon, Jan 27 Introduction and Sign up for presentations

Good B. 1994. Medicine, Rationality and Experience. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
Chaps 1, 2

Section 1: A Critical Review of the Foundations of Euro-Western Biomedicine

Wed, Jan 29 Biomedicine works in many cases, but what is missing?

Krieger N, Fee E. 1994. "Social Class: The Missing Link in US Health Data." *International Journal of Health Services* 24: 25-44

Krieger N, Bassett M. 1993. "The Health of Black Folk: Disease, Class, and Ideology in Science." In The "Racial" Economy of Science : Toward a Democratic Future, ed. S Harding, pp. 161-169. Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Kleinman, A 1988. The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing, and the Human Condition. New York: Basic Books
Chaps 1, 5, 6

Mon, Feb 3 Medical Education in the US – The Case of Reproductive Health
Martin E. 1987. The Woman in the Body: The Cultural Construction of Reproduction. Boston:
Beacon Press
Parts 1, 2 (pgs 1-68)

Wed, Feb 5 Martin, cont'd - Gender Ideology, Part 3 (pgs 69-178)

Mon, Feb 10 The Constant Negotiation of Categories – Genetic Screening in America
Rapp R. 1999. Testing Women, Testing the Fetus. New York: Routledge
Chaps 3, 4, 7

Wed, Feb 12 Rapp, cont'd – Ambiguity in the Lab and the Burdens of Knowledge, Chaps 8, 9

Mon, Feb 17 A Clash of Ideologies: American Epilepsy or Hmong Shamanism
Fadiman A. 1997. The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American
Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux
Preface, Chaps 1-5

Wed, Feb 19 Fadiman, cont'd - Miscommunication and Its Results, Chaps 7,11,17,18,19

Mon, Feb 24 Presentation of Final Paper Proposals

Wed, Feb 26 Presentation of Final Paper Proposals

Section 2: Social Ills, Global Diseases, and Catastrophic Transformations

Mon, Mar 3 Nervos and Pharmaceutical Dependency in Brazil
Scheper-Hughes N. 1992. Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil.
Berkeley: University of California Press
Chap 5

Wed, Mar 5 Scheper-Hughes, Hunger and Silence, cont'd – Chap 6

Mon, Mar 10 AIDS, Risk, and Poverty in Contemporary Haiti
Farmer P. 1992. AIDS and Accusation: Haiti and the Geography of Blame. Berkeley:
University of California Press
Parts 3, 4

Wed, Mar 12 Farmer, cont'd – Accusations and Isms in Historical Context
Farmer 1992, Part 5

Farmer P. 1997. "On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below." In Social
Suffering, ed. A Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock, pp. 261-84. Berkeley: University of
California Press

Mon, Mar 17 – no class, Spring Break

Wed, Mar 19 – no class, Spring Break

Mon, Mar 24 Catastrophe and The Controversy of Pain - Bhopal
Das V. 1995. Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India. Delhi: Oxford University Press
Chaps 6, 7

Wed, Mar 26 The Normalization of Catastrophe
Petryna A. 2002. Life Exposed: Biological Citizens after Chernobyl. Princeton: Princeton University Press
Chaps 1, 5

Section 3: Curing the Ills that Plague Us – Or Not?

Mon, Mar 31 Historical perspectives of Central African Healing
Evans-Pritchard, E E 1976 Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande. Oxford, Clarendon Press.
Chaps 5, 7, 11

Wed, Apr 2 Contemporary Uganda: Colonial influences, mythical proportions
White, Luise 1997 (unpublished) "The Needle and the State: Immunization and Inoculation in Africa. Or, The Practice of Unnational Sovereignty", paper given at Workshop on Immunization and the State, Delhi, India, pp 1-32

White, Luise 1995 "'They could make their victims dull': Genders and Genres, Fantasies and Cures in Colonial Southern Uganda" *American Historical Review*, Volume 100, Number 5, pp 1379-1403

Whyte, Susan Reynolds 1982 "Penicillin, Battery Acid and Sacrifice" in *Social Science and Medicine*, Volume 16, pp 2055-2064

Mon, Apr 7 South Asia: Development, Smallpox eradication and Shamanism
Pigg, Stacey Leigh 1995 "Acronyms and Effacement: Traditional Medical Practitioners (TMP) in International Health Development" in *Social Science and Medicine*, Volume 41, Number 1, pp 47-68

Greenhough, Paul 1995. "Intimidation, coercion, and resistance in the final stages of the South Asian Smallpox Eradication Campaign, 1973-1975." *Social Science and Medicine* Volume 41, Number 5, pp 633-646

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt 1988 "Healing Boundaries in South Kalimantan" in *Social Science and Medicine*, Volume 27, Number 8, pp 829-839

Wed, Apr 9 The Master Plan – Nazism and Social Cleansing
Proctor R. 1993. "Nazi Medicine and the Politics of Knowledge." In The "Racial" Economy of Science : Toward a Democratic Future, ed. S Harding, pp. 344-59. Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Langer L. 1997. "The Alarmed Vision: Social Suffering and Holocaust Atrocity." In Social Suffering, ed. A Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock, pp. 47-66. Berkeley: University of California Press

Harrington A. 1997. "Unmasking Suffering's Masks: Reflections on Old and New Memories of Nazi Medicine." In Social Suffering, ed. A Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock, pp. 181-206. Berkeley: University of California Press

Mon, Apr 14 Native American 'herbal' remedies, presentation sign-ups
all articles: *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, Volume 14, Number 4

Wed, Apr 16 – no class, holiday

Mon, Apr 21 **Presentation of Ethnographic Projects**

Wed, Apr 23 **Presentation of Ethnographic Projects**

Mon, Apr 28 Contemporary Chinese Public Health
readings TBA

Wed, Apr 30 Biomedicine and Democracy in the 'Developing' World
Needham J. 1993. "Science and Democracy: A Fundamental Correlation." In The "Racial" Economy of Science : Toward a Democratic Future, ed. S Harding, pp. 434-439. Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Adams V. 1998. Doctors for Democracy: Health Professionals in the Nepal Revolution.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Chaps 1, 2

Mon, May 5 Adams cont'd – Revolution, Chap 4

Wed, May 7 Adams cont'd – Corruption continued?, Chap 7

Mon, May 12 Bioethics and the Social Sciences
Callahan D. 1999. "The Social Sciences and the Task of Bioethics." *Daedalus* 128: 275-94

Kleinman A. 1999. "Moral Experience and Ethical Reflection: Can Ethnography Reconcile Them? - A Quandary for 'The New Bioethics'". *Daedalus* 128: 69-98

Das V. 1999. "Public Good, Ethics, and Everyday Life: Beyond the Boundaries of Bioethics." *Daedalus* 128: 99-134

Wed, May 14 Review
Last day of class, papers should be turned in during class.
No papers will be accepted after 5pm on this day.