

# Medical Anthropology

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Office Hours: Thursday 5:00-6:00PM  
Room CCC 413 or by appointment

**Course Description:** Medical Anthropology is a subfield of anthropology that draws upon social, cultural, biological, and linguistic anthropology to better understand those factors which influence health and well being (broadly defined). We will study the intersection between environment, biology, culture, and belief. We will look at the social and political economic shaping of illness and suffering and examine healing systems—including biomedicine—as cultural systems of knowledge and practice. Topics covered include disease and environment; health care from different cultures; approaches for culturally responsive health care; the politics of health care; and how we die.

## Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the course students will be able to:

- Compare and appreciate health care from several different cultures.
- Critically examine social institutions, social structures, and policies that deal specifically with human health.
- Describe strategies for pluralistic medical systems.
- Explain the problems of accessing health care in a multicultural society.

## Required Texts/Articles:

- Text Rental: *Ethnomedicine* by Pamela I. Erickson
- Text Purchase: *Course Reader for ANTH 380* (located in book store)
- \*Purchase on your own, *How We Die* by Sherwin B. Nuland (available used on Amazon)
- Additional required readings will be posted on D2L and should be completed for the week assigned.

## In-class Videos:

- Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick? (on eReserve)

## Course Requirements:

1) The course will be a combination of lectures and discussions. The course assignments will require you to read, think, and write a lot. ALL READINGS ARE MANDATORY AND MUST BE COMPLETED FOR THE WEEK ASSIGNED. There will be weekly reading responses (20%), an in-class mid-term exam

(30%), and a final paper (40%). The remainder of your grade will be based on attendance/participation including in-class discussion activities and/or quizzes (10%).

2) **Reading responses:** A series of short (200 word) responses beginning Week 2. Students will write a response to the readings and post it to their D2L group. The reading responses are thoughtful comments and questions that arise from the readings for that week. Your comment should make clear reference to the text(s) being discussed. Responses must be posted by **10:00 PM on Wednesday prior to the Thursday class session for credit.**

3) **Midterm exam:** A combination of short answer responses, matching and multiple-choice.

4) **3000 word final paper:** Students have the following options for the final project:

- a. An ethnographic research paper based on a **illness narrative** that includes either 1) an interview with a family member or friend who has experienced illness, or 2) an interview with a family member or friend who has witnessed or been a caregiver for a relative struggling with illness and undergoing treatment.
- b. A **research paper** addressing either a contemporary disease or the development and use of a new technology. You may also propose another research topic (preferred).
- c. An **in-depth proposal for a research project** which engages with some of the issues and literature discussed in the class. The proposal would be appropriate for a BA or Master's thesis project or grant proposal.
- d. Prepare a one paragraph **abstract proposing your topic due Week 10.**
- e. Draft of final project due for **peer review Week 14.**

**Summary:**

- Reading responses, drafts, and reviews 20%
- Mid-term exam: 30%
- Final paper: 40%
- Attendance/Participation: 10%
- 5 point extra credit *Writing in the Social Sciences Workshop* offered during the second half of the term.

A	93 – 100%	C	73 – 76%
A-	90 – 92%	C-	70 – 72%
B+	87 – 89%	D+	67 – 69%
B	83 – 86%	D	60 – 66%
B-	80 – 82%	F	below 60%
C+	77 – 79%		

*Exam, Essay, and Participation/Attendance/Courtesy Policy:*

The mid-term exam and final paper are required. Make up exams will only be granted under special circumstances and unexcused absences from the exam or failure to submit a final paper on the date due will receive a failing grade. **Make-ups will NOT be allowed for missed weekly reading responses, quizzes, D2L assignments, or missed in-class discussion group activities unless arrangements are made at least 48 hours in advance.**

**Attendance and participation** are required and essential to your success in this course. Participation means contributing to discussion and being engaged. **More than 3 absences is considered excessive and will result in a lower grade.** Using mobile devices, texting, or working on non-class material are not allowed during class. Computers, smart phones and other devices **MUST BE PUT AWAY** during class, i.e. not accessible! In addition to grading criteria outlined above, **final grades will be averaged up or down to the nearest whole number based on compliance with above guidelines.**

*A Note on Academic Resources:* Academic sources are authoritative, sourced, peer reviewed, objective, and written for academics. **Please use academic books, journal articles, and reports for your essay assignments.** Sources such as newspaper articles, magazine articles, opinion pieces, and websites are not commonly academic and are not acceptable citations. Please consult a Reference Librarian if you have questions about your references.

### *Plagiarism Policy*

In keeping with the policy of this university, plagiarism (using other people's thoughts or words without acknowledging the source) is unacceptable and can lead to a failing grade in the course. The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. In addition, all infractions will be reported to the university and entered into the student's file. For more information please refer to: <http://www.uwsp.edu/regrec/Pages/ferpaStudent.aspx>


### *Disability Resources*


If you are in need of any special accommodations or resources, please contact me in private.

## Course Schedule

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***Complete each week's reading assignment by 10:00 PM Wednesday for the Thursday meeting.***


 = points


 = reading

### What's So Cultural About Disease?


#### **Week 1** – January 22-24


Welcome to class and course mechanics.

 Erickson – Ethnomedicine, pp. 35-58 (Thursday)

 Begin reading for next week!


#### **Week 2** – January 29 - January 31


 Reader – Inescapable Ecologies (125)


 Reading Response

#### **Week 3** – February 5-7

 Unnatural Causes – Place Matters

 Reader – Obesity Epidemic (85)

 Reader – On Food – Manufacturing Food Insecurity (19)



 Reading Response

**Week 4** – February 12-14



-  Reader – The Mindful Body (45)
-  Reader – How Race Becomes Biology (10)
-  Reading Response

**Illness and Cultural Experience**

**Week 5** – February 19-21

-  Reader – Medicine Between Science and Religion (60)
-  Reading Response

**Week 6** – February 26-28

-  Reader – Medicine Between Science and Religion (finish)
- Guest Lecture – Dani Lai, DNP, APRN, FNP-C, Ascension Health
-  Reading Response

**Week 7** – March 5-7

-  Reader – Native American Beliefs Concerning Health and Unwellness (113)
-  Reading Response

**Week 8** – March 12-14



-  Video
-  **In-class Midterm Exam (Thursday)**

**Models for Culturally Responsive Health Care**



**Week 9** – March 19-21

-  **Spring Break**




**Week 10** – March 26-28

-  Reader – Hearing Voices (3) (Note: Begin reading for Week 11)
-  **Final project abstract and partial bibliography due as hard copy in class and upload to D2L groups (Thurs).**

**Week 11** – April 2-4

-  Reader - Healing by Heart: Hmong Culture and Change (119)
-  Reading Response

**Week 12** – April 9-11

-  Reader – Jason Throop (27)
-  Nina Nissen (7)
-  Reading Response

**Theorizing Power, Politics and the Body**

**Week 13** – April 16-18

-  Reader – Aihwa Ong (14)
-  Reader – Michael Foucault (16)
-  Reading Response

## How We Die

### Week 14 – April 23-25


 How We Die, pp. 1-117


 **Final Project Draft Posted to Groups (Thursday)**

 **Peer Review by Sunday 10:00 PM**


### Week 15 – April 30 – May 2

 How We Die, pp. 118-269

 Reader – On Caring (19)

 Reading Response

### Week 16 – May 7-9

 Presentations on Final Project



### **. Final Exam Schedule:**

Sec. 1, May 14<sup>th</sup> 12:30PM to 2:30PM