

Perspectives in Medical Anthropology

Anthropology 425/525

Prof. Margaret Everett

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10-12 and by appointment

Course Description

This course offers a detailed examination of the anthropological study of medical practice and illness experiences. We will focus primarily on examples from the United States and biomedicine, as well as the distribution and response to global diseases, such as AIDS. Students will learn about the theoretical tools anthropologists use to discern the human experience of illness and to recognize the exercise of power in medical practices. We will pay special attention to developments in medical technologies (such as prenatal screening and organ transplants) and the implications for the status of “the body.”

Readings

The following required books are available at the PSU bookstore. Other assigned readings are available through WebCT (see below).

Baer, Singer, Susser. *Medical Anthropology and the World System: A Critical Perspective*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1997.

Lock, Young and Cambrosio, eds. *Living and Working with the New Medical Technologies: Intersections of Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Farmer, Paul. *Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Evaluation

Your grade in this course will be based on one paper assignment (20%) a take-home mid-term exam (35%) and a take-home final exam (45%). Graduate students will complete a 15 page research paper rather than the final exam.

Policies:

All required work must be completed to receive a grade. Late papers will be penalized, except in cases of verifiable illness or emergency.

Disabilities Statement:

Any student with a documented disability condition (e.g., physical, learning, psychological, vision, or hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact both the instructor and the Disability Resources Center at the beginning of the term.

WebCT:

Course syllabus, handouts, assignments, and lecture outlines will be available on WebCT. All students can access WebCT with an odin account. To login, or to find out how to get a login ID and password, go to www.webct.pdx.edu. For students who have never accessed WebCT before, your login ID is your odin user ID, and your password is usually the last 4 digits of your social security number. If you do not have an odin account, you can find out how to get one at <https://www.account.pdx.edu>.

Schedule

Week 1 (1/9-1/11): Medicine and Anthropology: Contemporary Approaches

Baer, Singer, Susser, Chapter 1

Lock, Allan and Cambrosio, Introduction (pp.1-16)

*See: "What is medical anthropology?" <http://www.medanthro.net/definition.html> (link is on home page of webct)

Week 2 (1/18): Illness Narratives: Making Sense of Suffering

Arthur Kleinman, "The Vulnerability of Pain and the Pain of Vulnerability," *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing, and the Human Condition* (New York: Basic Books, 1988). (WebCT)

Gaylene Becker, "Order and Chaos" IN *Disrupted Lives: How People Create Meaning in a Chaotic World*, Berkeley: UC Press, 1997, pages 37-58. (WebCT)

Linda Layne, "'How's the Baby Doing?': Struggling with Narratives of Progress in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 10(4):624-656, 1996. (WebCT)

Week 3 (1/23-1/25): The Mindful Body

Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock, "The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology," in Peter Brown, ed., *Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology* (Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1998). (WebCT)

Emily Martin, "The Woman in the Flexible Body," in Adele E. Clarke and Virginia L. Olesen, eds., *Revisioning Women, Health and Healing: Feminist, Cultural, and Technoscience Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 1999). (WebCT)

Week 4(1/30-2/1): Technologies and the Body I

Paper due in class 1/30

From *Living and Working with the New Medical Technologies*, Chapters 8-9:

8. Screening the body: the Pap smear and the mammogram Patricia A. Kaufert

9. Extra chromosomes and blue tulips: medico-familial interpretations Rayna Rapp

Video: Sound and Fury

Week 5(2/6-2/8): Technologies and the Body II: Organ Transplants

From *Living and Working with the New Medical Technologies*, Chapters 11-12:

11. On dying twice: culture, technology, and the determination of death Margaret Lock
12. The practice of organ transplants: networks, documents, translations Veena Das.

Week 6(2/13-2/15): Technologies and the Body III: Cyborg Babies?

Take-Home Midterm Due 2/13 in class

- Lisa Mitchell and Eugenia Georges, "Baby's First Picture: The Cyborg Fetus of Untrasound Imaging," in *Cyborg Babies*, Routledge, 1998 (WebCT)
- Cartwright, Elizabeth, "The Logic of Heartbeats: Electronic Fetal Monitoring and Biomedically Constructed Birth" IN *Cyborg Babies*, Routledge, 1998 (WebCT)

Week 7(2/20-2/22): Power, Knowledge and Practice

- Lorna A. Rhodes, "The Game of Hot Shit," *Emptying Beds: The Work of an Emergency Psychiatric Unit* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). (WebCT)
- Deborah Lupton, "Power Relations and the Medical Encounter." From: *Medicine as Culture*, Deborah Lupton, Sage, 2003. (WebCT)

Week 8(2/27-3/1): The Medicalization of Social Problems

- Baer, Singer and Susser, *Medical Anthropology and the World System* (read Part II: The Social Origins of Disease and Suffering)

Video: Dying to be Thin

Week 9(3/6-3/8): Responding to Global Disease

- Paul Farmer, *Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues*

Week 10(3/13-3/15): Genetics, Bioethics, and Culture

- Alice Ruth Wexler, "Chorea/graphing Chorea: The Dancing Body of Huntington's Disease." From: *Biotechnology and Culture*, Indiana University Press, 2000. (WebCT)
- Margaret Everett, "The Body as Property in the Biotech Century." *General Anthropology*, 2004. (WebCT)
- Taussig, Rapp, Heath, "Flexible Eugenics: Technologies of the Self in the Age of Genetics." From: *Genetic Nature/Culture*, University of California Press, 2003.(WebCT)

*See CDC Tuskegee website timeline: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/od/tuskegee/time.htm>
(link is on WebCT homepage)

Take-Home Final and Graduate Student Papers Due Wednesday, March 22, by 4pm.