Culture and Health  
ANT 324 L  
SAC 4.118, MWF 11am – 12pm

Professor Pauline Turner Strong  
Department of Anthropology  
University of Texas at Austin

Office Hours: M 1:00-2:30pm  
SAC 4.130

Course Description:
This course considers the historical, social, political, economic and cultural foundations of Western Medicine, and introduces students to indigenous and alternative health systems. The course also considers the linkage between modern medicine and the construction of modern subjectivity and personhood, and analyzes local and global health disparities based on social, political, and economic inequalities.

In this course students will develop an understanding of the cultural and historical construction of health, illness, race, gender, the body, subjectivity, and personhood. They will be introduced to the history of the biomedical model of health and illness, and develop an awareness of alternatives to the biomedical model. Students will develop an understanding of the social, political, and economic context of health systems and health disparities, both locally and internationally. They will also develop a comparative understanding of the ethical concepts embedded in the biomedical and alternative models of health and illness.

This course carries a Global Cultures flag. It also fulfills the requirements for the certificate in Native American and Indigenous Studies (with a group project on an indigenous issue).

Learning Objectives:
• Students will develop an understanding of the cultural and historical construction of health, illness, race, gender, the body, subjectivity, and personhood.
• Students will become aware of the history of the biomedical model of health and illness.
• Students will develop an awareness of global alternatives to the biomedical model as well as essentials of cross-cultural communication (i.e., cultural competence).
• Students will develop an understanding of the social, political, and economic context of health systems and health disparities, both locally and globally (i.e., structural competence).
• Students will develop a comparative understanding of the ethical concepts embedded in the biomedical and alternative models of health and illness.
Course Requirements:
Students will be required to attend class regularly and to participate fully in class discussions. Students must read the assigned material carefully prior to class, and will take turns facilitating class discussions. More than three absences without notice shall be reflected in the final grade. There will be quizzes but no exams, two papers on the readings, and a final group project. The final project will involve experiential learning in an area covered by the course (e.g., cultural or media constructions of the body; contemporary debates on illnesses, epidemics, obesity, etc; health equity; health disparities; reproductive health; indigenous or non-Western healing practices; bioethics).

Evaluation:
 Attendance, Participation, Quizzes: 20%
 First paper (1000 words): 25%
 Second paper (1000 words): 25%
 Group Project: 30%

This class uses a standard plus/minus scale. Opportunities for extra credit will be announced, requiring attendance at an optional lecture and a response paper.

Course Texts

The following required texts are available at the University Coop Bookstore. Those marked with an asterisk are available through PCL.


*Holmes, Seth M. *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmers in the United States*, University of California Press, 2013. (PCL electronic resource)


Course Schedule
This is a general schedule. Please see Canvas for more specific assignments beyond Week 1.

Week 1: Introduction

1/17  No readings
1/19  *Understanding & Applying Medical Anthropology*, Chapter 1
  *Reimagining Global Health*, Introduction

Weeks 2-3: Theoretical, Evolutionary, and Historical Perspectives

*Reimagining Global Health*, Chapters 2 & 3 (pp. 15-73)
*Understanding & Applying Medical Anthropology*, Chapters 2-3, 5-7, 9-10 (pp. 25-46, 52-85, 99-115)

Weeks 4-5: Cultural Approaches in Medical Anthropology

*Understanding & Applying Medical Anthropology*, Chapters 11-12, 14-27 (pp. 116-139, 155-285)

Weeks 6-7: Biomedicine, Technology, and the Body: An Ethnography

Margaret Lock, *Twice Dead: Organ Transplants and the Reinvention of Death.*
  Preamble & Ch. 1 (pp. 1-56)
  Chs. 2, 3 & 4 (pp. 57-129)
  Chs. 5, 6 & 7 (pp. 130-190)
  Chs. 8, 9 & 10 (pp. 191-262)
  Chs. 11 & 12 & 13 (pp. 263-314)
  Chs. 13, 14 & Reflections (pp. 315-378)

Week 8: Culture, Illness & Mental Health

*Understanding & Applying Medical Anthropology*, Chapters 29-31, 40 (pp. 298-330, 394-399)

Martin, Emily. *Bipolar Expeditions: Mania and Depression in American Culture*
  Preface, Introduction & Ch. 1 (pp. xv-xix & 1-54)
  Chs. 2 & 3 (pp. 55-98)

SPRING BREAK

Week 9: Culture, Illness & Mental Health: An Ethnography

Martin, Emily. *Bipolar Expeditions*
  Chs. 4, 5 & 6 (pp. 99-173)
  Chs. 7 & 8 (pp. 175-233)
  Ch. 9 & Conclusion (pp. 234-280)

Week 10: Ethics and Values in Health
*Reimagining Global Health*, Chapters 4 & 9
Additional readings to be posted on Canvas

**Weeks 11-12: Cultural and Structural Competence**

*Understanding & Applying Medical Anthropology*, Chapters 32-35 (pp. 333-362)
Seth Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmers in the United States*
  Introduction and Ch. 1 (pp. 1-44)
  Chs. 2 & 3 (pp. 45-87)
  Chs. 4 & 5 (pp. 88-154)
  Chs. 6 & 7 (pp. 155-198)

**Weeks 13-14: Stigma, Health Disparities, and Global Health**

*Understanding & Applying Medical Anthropology*, chapters 36-45 (pp. 363-446)
*Reimagining Global Health*, Chapters 11-12
  Preface, Introduction & Ch. 1 (pp. xv-xix & 1-58)
  Chs. 2, 3 & 4 (pp. 59-97)
  Chs. 5 & 6 (pp. 98-162)
  Chs. 7, 8 & 9 (pp. 163 – 223)
  Chs. 10 & 11 (pp. 224-268)
  Chs. 12 & 13 (pp. 269-331)

**Week 15: Presentations of Group Projects**
Presentation topics and schedule to be announced.