

ANTH 208 WA: Medical Anthropology

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Medical anthropology is a growing specialty within general anthropology that combines biological, evolutionary, and cultural approaches to understanding health and healing in a global context. In this course, we will examine different definitions of disease, illness, and healing, known as *ethnomedicine*, from communities around the world, including the West. We will also focus on the different theoretical approaches medical anthropologists use to understand these issues, and the ways in which the practice of medicine is complicated by pluralistic, and often competing, ethnomedical systems. This course counts for the International (I) core curriculum credit.

Learning Objectives:

1. CONTENT

- a. Identify anthropological terms, theories, communities, and places.
- b. Identify biological, evolutionary, and cultural aspects of health and healing.

2. CRITICAL THINKING and ANALYSIS

- a. Apply anthropological theories to issues of health and healing.
- b. Recognize the influence of culture on all medical systems.
- c. Recognize the influence of political economy on global health and healing.
- d. Recognize the complications of medical practice in multicultural environments.

3. SKILLS

- a. Develop and successfully convey written arguments in multiple formats.
- b. Develop and apply cultural relativism.

Required Readings

1. *Exploring Medical Anthropology*, Donald Joralemon. Prentice Hall, 3rd edition, 2010. 978-0205693511
2. *Dancing Skeletons: Life and Death in West Africa*, Katherine Dettwyler. Any edition. 978-1478607588
3. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*, Anne Fadiman. Any edition. 978-0374533403
4. Article Excerpts (PDF format) on Canvas

Online course philosophy:

As an online course, we will use **Canvas** as our classroom. This is an asynchronous course, meaning that we will not meet at specific times during the semester. On **Canvas**, you will find this syllabus, assigned articles and readings, and assignments. You should log on to Canvas and familiarize yourself with the site. If there are any problems with access to this site, notify me immediately. Lectures will be presented as videos through Canvas Collaborate. Please see Canvas > Lectures for more information.

Grades:

Grades will be calculated on a point basis. Your grade will be calculated by dividing your total points by 410. Letter grades will be assigned on a ten point scale with +/- . There will be no curve. There will be no extra credit. You will always be able to see your current grade on Canvas.

Grading Scale and Percentages		
Quizzes	90 (7 assigned/15 pts/quiz, 1 lowest dropped)	22%
Discussion Boards	120 (7 assigned/20 pts/discussion, 1 lowest dropped)	30%
Essays	100 (3 assigned/50 pts/essay, 1 lowest dropped)	24%
Final Exam	100	24%
TOTAL	410	100%

Responsibilities (yours and mine):

I will try my hardest to respond to emails promptly – but please keep in mind that *emails sent after normal business hours (5pm weekdays) may not be returned as quickly*. Since course assignments are due at the latest on Mondays in most cases, please do not wait until the last minute in case something comes up – I may not be able to respond as quickly as you would like.

That said, *you control when you turn in assignments*. The course is divided into three units and further divided into multiple sections. Although there are deadlines, often weekly, the due dates are the last possible date by which they must be turned in or counted late (see late policy below). You may work ahead. *All due dates are Sunday, except for the final exam which corresponds to the last day of exam week*. Keep in mind, though, *that you may work ahead and turn in assignments before they are due*. As I know you all have very busy schedules, I hope this syllabus will allow you to be flexible but still allow me to keep everyone on track.

And finally, I will work very hard to have all of your assignments graded with feedback and posted to Canvas a week after they are due. Please note that if you turn your assignments in early, you may not get that grade until a week after the due date. This is to ensure that I have a sense of how the entire class is doing and to keep my grading is consistent.

Assignments:

In order to get a good grade in this course, you must keep up with the readings and turn in assignments on time; doing so, especially keeping up with the syllabus, is your responsibility. I will not be able to remind you of readings, exams, or assignments – so make sure you check the syllabus often. All assignments should be submitted via Canvas, either in the space provided or as an uploaded attachment. If necessary, you can email me assignments but please try to use Canvas exclusively.

a. Exams

There will be one exam in this course, a cumulative final exam. The final exam will be open book and will incorporate multiple choice, essay, vocabulary IDs and map questions. The final exam will be available on Canvas during the last section of the course. Final exam due dates are final and non-negotiable (the late policy **does not** apply). See schedule below.

b. Quizzes

There will be seven quizzes, available on Canvas. Quizzes will include multiple choice and short essay questions. Content for each quiz corresponds to the topic and readings it is next to on the assignment schedule below. You may take each quiz twice only. *Students must*

complete the quiz by midnight of the day they are due. They will be unavailable after this time. Each quiz will be worth 20 points each, but the lowest score will be dropped.

c. Reading Response Essays:

There will be three essays one for each of our three sections. *All essays are due by midnight on the day they are assigned. **I will only count two essays toward your final grade; I will drop the lowest (or you may skip one).*** You should upload each essay to Canvas. Please see Canvas for assignment, directions, rubric and format.

d. Discussion Boards:

There will be seven discussion posts. To receive full points for each discussion assignment, you must make one initial post (in response to my question) and reply to **ONE** of your classmates' questions. I will be grading discussions on the content and quality of your questions and replies. Posts should refer to course readings and material. In turn, your responses to your classmates' questions should go beyond simply agreeing or disagreeing – great responses will also add to the conversation using course content. Please also make sure to be respectful and appropriate. Please **see the grading rubric** on Canvas for more specific details on how I will grade the discussions.

Your initial posts (responses to the question I pose) must be posted one full day before the DQ due date. This will allow everyone to get their questions up and have time to reply. To access the discussion boards, simply click on the *discussions* button on the left side navigational tool on our Canvas home page for our class. Each discussion assignment will be set up in a separate forum. To post for Discussion 1, click on *the forum labeled Discussion 1*. Then click on *thread* and type your question in the box below. To read a question posted by your classmates, click on that thread. To reply, hit *reply* and type your question in the box below. *There will be 7 total opportunities for discussion, with each worth 20 points, but I will drop the lowest score. **Please note that the late policy does not apply to discussions and late posts will not be graded.*** Discussions are time-sensitive, since students must be able to read and respond to all posts.

Late Policy:

All assignments are due on the days assigned. After the due date there is a 7 day grace period: late assignments will not be penalized if submitted during this time, but they may not receive any feedback on the grade. After the week grace period, all late assignments will receive either a 50% or a 0 depending on the severity of the lateness and the quality of the work.

Extended Time (ET) Policy:

To be considered for an ET, students must have completed 2/3 of course assignments including essays and have demonstrated a valid and appropriate need. If you are considering an ET, you must discuss this with me and your adviser prior to the last week of class.

Honor Code:

All work is subject to the [Mary Baldwin University Honor Code](#). It is your responsibility to understand and follow MBU's Honor Code, as well as to [understand what constitutes academic misconduct and plagiarism](#). Honor Code violations will be reported to the Honor Council.

Accommodations:

As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act that was passed by Congress in 1990 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Mary Baldwin University works to assist students with disabilities to remove

barriers to academic success. If you are in need of accommodations your first and only necessary stop is [Accessibility Services](#) in the Academic Resource Center, where you can self-disclose in a confidential meeting and complete documentation for initiating the accommodations that will help you to be successful in the classroom. Please contact Dr. Carey Usher at cusher@marybaldwin.edu.

Writing Center and Tutoring:

Students are encouraged to make use of the resources in the MBU [Academic Resource Center](#), particularly for the writing center and tutoring. Online and virtual sessions are available.

See Schedule of Assignments on the next page.

SCHEDULE of ASSIGNMENTS

COURSE SCHEDULE			
Getting Started			
Before the semester starts, please review syllabus, get books, familiarize yourself with Canvas, and introduce yourself on Canvas Discussion Forum.			
Unit 1: January 11 – January 31, 2021			
All medicine is ethnomedicine.			
Section	Topics	Readings	Assignments:
Section 1: 01/11 – 01/17	Anthropology, medical anthropology, research questions and methods.	Lavenda and Schultz, “Anthropology” Joralemon, preface and chapter 1-2 Lecture 1-3	Quiz 1 Discussion 1 Due: 01/17/21
Section 2: 01/18 – 01/24	Ethnomedicine, Biomedicine, and the influence of culture.	Hahn, “Introduction” Foster, “Disease Etiologies in Non-Western Medical Systems” Miner, “Body Ritual of the Nacirema” Film: <i>Witchcraft Among the Azande</i> Lecture 4	Quiz 2 Discussion 2 Due: 01/24/21
Case Study: 01/25— 01/31	Case Studies: Puerto Rican hot-cold theories, witchcraft among the Azande, and ebola in West Africa	Harwood, “The Hot-Cold Theory of Disease” Ebola news articles Lecture 5	First Essay: <i>Ethnomedicine</i> Due: 01/31/21
Unit 2: February 1 – March 7, 2021			
Global patterns of health and healing.			
Section	Topics	Readings and Films	Assignments:
Section 3: 02/01– 02/07	Plagues and People: evolutionary and ecological	Joralemon, chapter 3 Brown, “Cultural Adaptations to Endemic Malaria in Sardinia”	Quiz 3 Discussion 3 Due: 02/7/21

	perspectives on disease.	Lecture 6-7 Film Clips: "Global Scourge of Malaria," "Malaria, Man vs. Parasite"	
Section 4: 02/08 – 02/14	Plagues and Inequality: critical medical anthropology: political economy, poverty, and social inequality.	Joralemon, chapter 4, pp 41-47 Farmer, "Social Inequalities and Infectious Diseases" Films: from <i>Unnatural Causes</i> Lecture 8	Quiz 4 Discussion 4 Due: 02/14/21
Section 5: 02/15 – 02/21	Interpretive Medical Anthropology: disease experiences, suffering, and stigma.	Joralemon, chapter 4, pp 47-54 Waxler, "Learning to be a Leper" Inhorn, "... Being Discreditable in American Society" Lecture 9	Quiz 5 Discussion 5 Due: 02/21/21
Case Study: 02/22 – 03/07	Case Study: nutrition and malnutrition in Mali.	<i>Dancing Skeletons: Life and Death in West Africa</i> Film Clip: <i>Hard Talk</i> , on female genital cutting/mutilation	Second Essay: <i>Dancing Skeletons</i> Due: 03/07/21

Unit 3: March 9 – April 13, 2020

Medical Practitioners and the practice of medicine.

Section	Topics	Readings and Films	Assignments:
Section 6: 03/8 – 03/14	Health Practitioners: healers and healing from a cross-cultural perspective.	Joralemon, chapter 6 Lehmann, "Eyes of the <i>Ngangas</i> " Film: <i>Spirit Doctors</i> Lecture 10	Quiz 6 Discussion 6 Due: 03/14/21
Section 7: 03/15 – 03/21	Medical Ethics.	Joralemon, chapter 7-8 Lecture 11	Quiz 7 Discussion 7 Due: 03/21/21
Case Study: 03/22 – 04/09	Case Study: Hmong culture in the United States.	<i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i> Lecture 5 Film: <i>The Split Horn</i>	Third Essay: <i>The Spirit Catches You</i> Due: 04/11/21

Final Exam due no later than MONDAY, April 19, 2021 at midnight

