

ANTH 15: MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY: METHODS & PRACTICE

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Units:	4
Hours:	4 lecture per week (48 total per quarter)
Advisory:	Not open to students with credit in ANTH 50.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area IV: Social & Behavioral Sciences
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will practice and apply understandings of an evolutionary perspective to changing relationships between human societies, ecologies and illness.
- Students will critically analyze and interpret methods and practice of medical anthropology.
- Students will apply anthropological principles for solving human problems on the local, regional and world scales.

Description

Introduction to medical anthropology, a subfield of the discipline of anthropology that seeks to understand and highlight how health, illness and healing practices are culturally constructed and mediated. Students will investigate global, cross-cultural and local issues related to health, sickness, healing, epidemiology, aging and dying from an applied and biocultural perspective, using anthropological theory and ethnographic fieldwork methods. Students will be exposed to diverse cultural interpretations of health, sickness and healing, the importance of viewing medical systems as social systems, understanding the socio-cultural context of medical decision making and therapy management, the principles of cultural competency, and the recurrent and ongoing problems of socioeconomic inequality and ecological disruptions that have an impact upon the differential distribution and treatment of human diseases.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Describe the history of the field of medical anthropology and how it is organized today, including career paths.
- Compare and contrast theories and methods utilized by researchers and practitioners within the field of medical anthropology.
- Recognize the role of culture, biology and ecology in the origins and social construction of illness or disease and in the culture specific production of health.
- Describe symptoms, diagnosis and therapies of different medical systems across cultures.

- Distinguish between the training, and contrast the authority, of non-Western and Western healing professionals.
- Evaluate the role of applied medical anthropology in national and international health development programs and the development of public health policy.
- Develop intercultural sensitivity and skills that promote cultural competency in a healthcare setting.

Course Content

- Introduction to medical anthropology
 - Medical anthropology as a subfield in a four-field anthropological approach
 - The historical development of medical anthropology
 - Medical anthropology today: an applied approach
- Theory and methods in medical anthropology
 - Sociocultural, biocultural and ecological theories
 - Introduction to ethnographic fieldwork theory and methods, including the analysis and interpretation of data
- Role of culture, biology and ecology on concepts of health, illness and healing
 - The concept of culture
 - Evolutionary and ecological perspectives on disease
 - Human biological variation
 - Changing indicators of health from foraging societies to industrialized societies
 - Models of ecology, culture and health
 - Social construction of disease and illness categories
 - Perceptions of internal and external body
 - Beliefs concerning mutilation of the body
 - The social production of health and treatment
 - Culture-bound syndromes
- Medical systems across cultures
 - Naturalistic medical systems
 - Supernaturalistic and magical medical systems
 - Power and organization in medical systems across cultures
 - Resource control and decision-making
- Healing roles across cultures
 - Characteristics, authority and training of healers
 - Shamanism in a cross-cultural perspective
- Applied medical anthropology
 - Contributions in formulation of public policy
 - Work of applied specialists to world health problems and health inequities resulting from globalization
- Cultural competency in health care
 - Cultural and linguistic barriers resulting in health disparities
 - Cultural competency history and policy
 - Practice of cultural competency skills

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

When taught as an online distance learning section, students and faculty need ongoing and continuous internet and email access.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of evaluation may include, but are not limited to:

- In-class objective examinations, including multiple-choice, completion, matching items and true/false

- B. In-class and out-of-class writing assignments, including essays and short papers
- C. Oral presentations and/or papers presenting individual or group research or fieldwork
- D. Assessment of participation in class discussions and exercises

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of instruction may include but are not limited to:

- A. Lecture
- B. All-class and small group discussions
- C. Multimedia presentations
- D. In-class group exercises
- E. Individual and group research or field projects

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

McElroy, Ann, and Patricia Townsend. Medical Anthropology in Ecological Perspective. 6th ed. Westview Press, 2015.

Brown, Peter J., and Svea Closser. Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology. 3rd ed. Routledge, 2016.

Wiley, Andrea S., and John Allen. Medical Anthropology: A Biocultural Approach. 3rd ed. Oxford University Press, 2016.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

Two hours of work outside of class are required for each hour of lecture or equivalent. Representative out-of-class reading, writing and other assignments can include:

- A. Reading assigned texts, articles or handouts and studying class notes.
- B. Doing various homework, including writing reading response essays and short papers.
- C. Preparing an oral presentation or written research paper based on individual or group research or fieldwork.
- D. Conducting research based on secondary sources.
- E. Conducting ethnographic fieldwork in a local setting.

Discipline(s)

Anthropology