

**Medical Anthropology**  
**Department of Anthropology**  
**Lakehead University**  
**ANTH 3312**  
**Fall 2022**

**Instructor:** Frederico Oliveira, PhD  
**Email:** foliveir@lakeheadu.ca  
**Dates of Appointments:** September 6, 2022, to December 1, 2022  
**Classes Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm (OA-2017)  
**Office:** OR-1041

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**Land Acknowledgment:**

Lakehead University respectfully acknowledges its campuses are located on the traditional lands of Indigenous peoples.

Lakehead University acknowledges the history that many nations hold in the areas around our campuses and is committed to a relationship with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples based on the principles of mutual trust, respect, reciprocity, and collaboration in the spirit of reconciliation.

**Course Description:**

This course is expected to expand the students' capacity to reflect on the sociocultural aspects supporting the notions of health, body, and disease. Considering the all-encompassing dominant features of conventional western medicine, it is rare to find opportunities to understand that many health systems exist worldwide and are supported by worldviews capable of expanding our horizons about human diversity and power relations. The notion of cultural relativism is the starting point for the students to realize the importance of considering the validity and efficacy of several systems of medical practice. To assess the particular and general features of medical cultures, classical and contemporary texts will be analyzed, comparing and contrasting conventional western medicine with other approaches. Social and political frameworks, interlinked with global scenarios and ethical dilemmas, will serve as the foundation for understanding how discourses about health, sanity and illness are engendered and disseminated.

**Course Readings:**

This is a cost-free course in terms of reading materials. A number of articles and book chapters are required readings and are listed below for each week. All are available electronically on the course website.

## **Course Requirements and Grading:**

<i>Class Participation</i>	Worth 10%
<i>Critical Reviews</i>	Worth 20%
<i>Debate Facilitation</i>	Worth 20%
<i>Midterm Exam</i>	Worth 20%
<i>October 18<sup>th</sup> meeting</i>	Worth 5%
<i>Final Project</i>	Worth 25%

Graded assignments include the following:

**Class Participation:** Attendance is mandatory. Reading (sometimes a lot) and attendance are critical to achieving a satisfactory grade and learning objectives in this course. Students are required to critically read all assigned materials before class and participate actively (in their own way) in class discussions and assignments. Students are allowed three absences without penalty (due to illness, emergency, travel, etc.). Subsequent unjustified absences will result in the loss of 5 points for each absence. Active and informed participation in discussion will usually raise your grade.

**Critical Reviews.** Critical Reviews assigned for each week must be completed by the start of the second class of that week (500 words). For example, classes are scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays. Critical Reviews are due by Wednesday at 11:59 pm and must be uploaded to the D2L dropbox assigned for this course. To write your reviews, you can choose the format of 1) comments or 2) reflexive questions and answers that arise from the readings of that week. To achieve a satisfactory grade, you are expected to present and discuss relevant points of the readings, bring examples, make associations with daily life situations, etc. These are some directions that can help you improve the quality of your critical reviews: a) make an effort to understand which of the problems the author is aiming to address. Try to see the big picture; b) When you do not agree with the author, on what basis do you explain your disagreement? When you agree, explain as well; c) Criticize properly; do not pass judgment based on personal opinion, taste, or preference; d) Is the argument internally consistent? Does the evidence (both that offered by the author and the evidence in the field) validate the argument? Students are allowed to miss one delivery without a penalty.

**Debate Facilitation:** Students will be responsible for facilitating a brief debate during the second class of each week (Thursday). These students will be pre-selected in the previous week and asked to present and expand their Critical Review to the class. Here are some of the requirements of this assignment:

- Each student is required to participate four times in the debate facilitations during the semester.
- Besides discussing the week's readings, the students will propose at least three questions to their classmates to motivate discussion.
- Visuals are encouraged (slide shows, short videos, pictures, real-life examples) but not mandatory.
- Each student will have 15-20 minutes for their presentations. The incorrect use of time for more or less will affect the marks for this assignment.

**Mid-Term Exam:** In order to verify the comprehension of the course material, students will be given a number of questions to respond to after the reading week. More details will be provided.

**Final Project:**

For this assignment, students will be asked to work individually. A 4,000 - 5,000 word final paper will be delivered, providing a critical and reflexive assessment of one of the following options:

- a) A narrative of an illness guided by: 1) an interview/conversation with a family member or a friend who has experienced illness, 2) an interview/conversation with a family member or a friend who has witnessed or been a caregiver for a relative struggling with illness or undergoing treatment, or 3) a first-person account of an illness experienced closely from a friend or a relative.
- b) A research paper addressing the historical changes in the perception of a disease or the development and use of a new medical technology.
- c) A review of an ethnography related to medical anthropology, connecting the book to the course readings.
- d) Choose a health system worldwide and describe its main notions of health, body, disease and healing.

It is mandatory that students use and make appropriate correlations with at least three authors (readings) seen during the course.

Students must choose their topics by October 18<sup>th</sup>, as they will meet with me and receive specific instructions based on their choice (5% of the assignment).

During the final week of the course (Nov. 29 and Dec. 1), students will present their final projects to the class. The written paper is due on December 9.

**General Course Policies:**

1. Avoid disrupting class by arriving late, leaving early, and/or allowing your cell phone to sound in class. Repeated disruptions will result first in a warning and then in a 5% penalty to the student's final grade.
2. It is expected that students will be respectful of their fellow students, their instructor, and cultures and traditions which are not their own.
3. Plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., that belong to someone else. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy another person's work and turn it in as your own, even if you should have that person's permission. Violation of the university's policy will result in a grade penalty or failure of the course.

4. No student will be allowed to take an exam past the date indicated on the course. There are exceptions like a documented medical emergency that does not allow the student to come to class, major religious observances that necessitate absence from class or athletic competitors representing Lakehead University supported by appropriate documentation. Other situations of emergency may appear and will be analyzed case by case. If you know that you will not be able to attend an exam, approach the instructor ahead of time, and we will discuss if you will be allowed to take a makeup test. If you miss a test for an emergency, approach the instructor as fast as possible.
5. Important information about the course (course outline, exam handouts, etc.) will be posted on the Desire2Learn website.
6. If you have questions regarding the course outline or content, you are welcome to address the instructor at the end of the classes or book an appointment.
7. Students are asked to check regularly (including before the class) their LakeheadU e-mail account and Desire2Learn for unforeseen changes to the course due to weather conditions or other reasons.
8. This course outline is subject to minor changes during the course of the semester.

## Course Schedule

### Week 1:

#### **Introduction**

(Class 1, Sept-6): Course Outline Presentation

(Class 2, Sept-8): Film

### Week 2:

#### **Cultural Relativism**

(Class 3, Sept-13)

(Class 4, Sept-15)

Franz Boas: [1896]. "Limitations of the Comparative Method" (from *Science Magazine*).

Benedict, Ruth. "The Individual and the Pattern of Culture [1934]" in *History of Anthropological Theory* (Paul Erickson & Liam Murphy, orgs. pp. 134-145).

Mead, Margaret. "Introduction, Coming of Age in Samoa [1928]" in *History of Anthropological Theory* (Paul Erickson & Liam Murphy, orgs. pp. 128-133).

### Week 3:

#### **Classical Approaches to Health and Healing**

(Class 5, Sept-20)

(Class 6, Sept-22)

Evans-Pritchard. (1937). "Witchcraft is and Organic and Hereditary Phenomenon" (Chapter 1 from *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*).

Evans-Pritchard. (1937). "The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events" (Chapter 4 from *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*).

Claude Lévi-Strauss. (1977). "The Effectiveness of Symbols" (from *Structural Anthropology*, Vol.1).

### Week 4:

#### **Medicine and Rationality**

(Class 7, Sept-27)

(Class 8, Sept-29)

Byron Good. (1994). "How Does Medicine Construct Its Objects?" In: *Medicine, Rationality, and Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 65-87.

Charles Rosenberg. (2007). "The Tyranny of Diagnosis: Specific Entities and Individual Experience". In: *Our Present Complaint: American Medicine, Then and Now*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 13-37.

**Week 5:**                    **Biopolitics of Health and Making up Patients**

(Class 9, Oct-4)  
(Class 10, Oct-6)

Blumhagen, D.W. (1979). The Doctor's White Coat: The Image of the Physician in Modern America. In: *Annals of Internal Medicine* 91(1):111-116.

Rouse, Carolyn. (2010). "Patient and Practitioner Noncompliance: Rationing, Resistance, and the Missing Conversation." In: *Anthropology and Medicine* 17(2): 187-200.

Brig, Emily & Spencer, Karen. (2018). Political economy of hope as a cultural facet of biomedicalization: A qualitative examination of constraints to hospice utilization among U.S. end stage cancer patients. In: *Social Science and Medicine* 200, pp, 107-113.

**Week 6:**

(No Class: Thanksgiving & Study Week, Oct 10-14)

**Week 7:**

(Class 9, Oct-18)            Individual meetings to discuss the final projects

(Class 10, Oct-20)        Midterm

**Week 8:**                    **Mental Health and Institutional Disciplines**

(Class 13, Oct-25)  
(Class 14, Oct-27)

Foucault Michel. (1965). "Introduction" and "The Insane (Chapter 3)", from *Madness and Civilization: a History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*.

Rosenhan, David (1973). "On Being Sane in Insane Places," *Science*, 179, pp. 250-8.

Brodwin, Paul. (2011). Futility in the Practice of Community Psychiatry. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 25 (2): 189-208.

**Week 9:**                    **Constructing Bodies, Constructing Gender**

(Class 15, Nov-1)  
(Class 16, Nov-3)

Mauss, Marcel. (1979). "The Notion of Body Techniques." *Sociology and Psychology: Essays*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul: 70-88.

Ong, Aihwa. (1988). "The Production of Possession: Spirits and the Multinational Corporation in Malaysia." *American Ethnologist*, 15(1):28-42.

Fisher, Jill. (2011). *Gender and the Science of Difference: Cultural Politics of Contemporary Science and Medicine (Studies in Modern Science, Technology, and the Environment)*, Chapter 10: Facial Feminization and Theory of Facial Sex Difference). New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

**Week 10:**

**New Technologies and Recombinant Families**

(Class 17, Nov-8)  
(Class 18, Nov-10)

Janet Carsten. (2004). "Introduction." In: *After Kinship*: 1-6.

Marcia Inhorn. (2003). "The Worms Are Weak." Male Infertility and Patriarchal Paradoxes in Egypt". In: *Men and Masculinities*, 5(3): 236-256.

Strathern, Marilyn. (2005). *Kinship, Law and the Unexpected: Relatives are Always a Surprise*. New York: Cambridge University Press (Chapter 1: Relatives Are Always a Surprise: Biotechnology in an Age of Individualism).

**Week 11:**

**Anthropology discovers science and laboratory**

(Class 19, Nov-15)  
(Class 20, Nov-17)

Latour, Bruno, and Steve Woolgar. 1979. *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press (Introduction and Chapter 1).

Latour, Bruno. *Science in Action*. 1986. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press. (Introduction: Opening Pandora's Black Box

**Week 12:**

**Public Health Initiatives and Ethical Dilemmas**

(Class 21, Nov-22)  
(Class 22, Dec-24)

Gruenbaum, Ellen. (2010). "Honorable Mutilation? Changing Responses to Female Genital Cutting in Sudan". In: *Anthropology and Public Health Bridging Differences in Culture and Society*. (Robert A Hahn, Marcia Inhorn, eds.), pp. 397-421.

Moland, Karen M. & Blystad, Astrid . (2010). "Counting on Mother's Love: The Global Politics of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV in Eastern Africa". In: *Anthropology and Public Health Bridging Differences in Culture and Society*. (Robert A Hahn, Marcia Inhorn, eds.), pp. 447-479.

**Week 13:**

**\*\*Final Project Presentations\*\***

(Class 23, Nov-29)  
(Class 24, Dec-1)

## **Desire2Learn**

The course uses Desire2Learn for its course website. To access the course website, or any other Desire2Learn-based course website, go to the LU portal login page at <https://lakeheadu.desire2learn.com/> and log in using your LU username and password. Once you have logged in to the portal, look for the **mycounselink** module, where you'll find the link to our course website along with the link to all other Desire2Learn-based courses you are registered.

## **Accessibility Needs**

Lakehead University is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible.