

**Medical Anthropology
Department of Anthropology
Lakehead University
ANTH 3312
Fall 2024**

Instructor: Frederico Oliveira, PhD
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Dates of Appointments: September 5, 2024, to November 28, 2024
Classes Hours: Thursdays from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm (OA-2015)
Office: OR-1041

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 biomedicine, 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 biomedicine 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:

Graded assignments include the following:

Class Participation
20% of course grade

Weekly Assignments
30% of course grade

Midterm
20% of course grade

Final Project
30% of course grade

Class Participation: 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 prior to class and participate actively (in their own way) in class discussions and assignments. Students are allowed to have a maximum of two unjustified absences without penalty. Subsequent unjustified absences will result in the loss of 5 participation points for each absence, and five unjustified absences will result in failing this course.

Weekly Assignments: During class sessions, students will bring a newspaper article or a clipping from other written media pieces accompanied by short reflections related to the readings assigned for that week. The short reflection paper should include a summary of the external piece and how it correlates with the reading material and its main topics (suggested length – 400 to 600 words). Be prepared to discuss how your assignment relates to the current class readings. This assignment will help you connect with what you are learning in class and the world around you. This assignment will also help you construct your final paper as we will discuss how to analyze concepts critically and associate them with real-life examples. Students must upload their papers to the D2L folder before each class.

Mid-Term: The midterm comprises reflexive topics where students will write their answers, connecting the reading material with practical examples. More details will be provided for this assignment.

Final Project:

For this assignment, students will be asked to work individually or in pairs. 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) Choose a health system worldwide and describe its central 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 24, 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. 28), 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, such as 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 emergence 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**

(Sept-5): Course Outline Presentation

Week 2: **Cultural Relativism**

(Sept-12)

Moore, Jerry. (2009). Franz Boas: Culture in Context (Chapter 3, Moore)
In: *Visions of Culture*. Lanham: Altamira Press.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. [1922]. Introduction: Argonauts of the Western Pacific". New York. E.P. Dutton, pp. 1-25.

Week 3: **Classical Approaches to Health and Healing**

(Sept-19)

Evans-Pritchard. (1937). "Witchcraft as an 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**

(Sept-26)

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**

(Oct-3)

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.

Mrig, 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:**Mental Health and Institutional Disciplines**

(Oct-10)

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 7:**Fall Reading Week**

(No Class: Thanksgiving & Fall Reading Week, Oct 14-18)

Week 8:

(Oct-24)

Individual meetings to discuss the final projects

Midterm

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

(Oct-31)

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

(Nov-7)

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

(Nov-14)

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

(Nov-21)

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****

(Nov-28)

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://myinfo.lakeheadu.ca/> and log in using your LU username and password. Once you have logged in to the portal, look for the **mycourselink** module, where you'll find the link to our course website along with the link to all other Desrise2Learn-based courses you are registered.

Use of AI

Generative artificial intelligence (Generative AI or GenAI) is a category of AI systems capable of generating text, images, or other media in response to prompts. These systems include ChatGPT and its variant Bing (built by OpenAI) and Bard (built by Google), among several others. Other Generative AI models include artificial intelligence art systems such as Stable Diffusion, Midjourney, and DALL-E. **Any use of GenAI systems to produce assignments for this course is not permitted.** All work submitted for evaluation in this course must be the student's original work. The submission of any work containing AI-generated content will be considered a violation of academic integrity ("Use of Unauthorized Materials").

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.