Course Description

This course provides an advanced introduction to the anthropology of health, illness and healing. Students will be introduced to key theories and current debates at the interface of anthropology and medicine through a focus on cross-cultural approaches to illness, pain, healing, the body and care. We will explore how different ways of experiencing and knowing the body, including varied concepts of gender, sexuality, and the life course, can radically alter how people think about and engage with issues of health and healing. This course explores biomedicine as one among many ways of thinking through and constituting personhood, illness and the body. It deals with the challenges that arise when biomedical expertise meets other understandings of illness and suffering; the multiple kinds of care provided in institutional, public, religious and domestic settings; the relationship between curing and healing; and the ways in which people grapple with affliction and uncertainty through narrative, through relationships, and through action. Medical anthropology is not only narrowly concerned with suffering and sickness but examines the significance of wellbeing, health and medicine for all domains of social life. This course therefore explores the centrality of health and healing to social, political, and historical processes in general.
Summary of Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to demonstrate knowledge that covers the key concepts, approaches and debates in medical anthropology. They will have a critical understanding of different theoretical approaches in medical anthropology and how they have changed how medical anthropologists conduct empirical research. They should be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the following:

- How social understandings of the human body are formed and transformed by healing knowledge and practices.

- How "traditional healers" form their practices in a field of multiple healer-patient relations and why "modernity" has not made non-biomedical forms of healing disappear.

- Why healing performances have an effect on both individual patients and social collectivities.

- Why broader frames of political, economic, and historical analysis are immediately relevant for an understanding of body, illness, and healing.

- How the objectification of the body by medical knowledge can be seen as forms of disciplinary power and control.

- Why the distinction between objectively described "disease" and subjectively perceived "illness" has both strengths and weaknesses.

- How notions of well-being are related to cultural understandings of sickness.

Course Plan and Indicative Readings

17th Sept  1: Introduction to medical anthropology
24th Sept  2: Interpreting Illness
1st Oct    3: Problems with Power
8th Oct    4: The Body in Medical Anthropology
15th Oct   5: Embodied Emotions (Alex Edmonds)
22nd Oct   6: The Plastic Body (Alex Edmonds)
29th Oct   7: Culture, Gender, and Sexuality
5th Nov    8: Healing and Healers
Week 1: Introduction to Medical Anthropology

Medical anthropology is a rapidly growing sub-discipline, but what is it? Why does it attract so much attention from anthropologists and non-anthropologists alike? This lecture will introduce some of the key issues in the field – what do we study and why? What can we learn from researching what it means to be healthy, sick, or dying in different cultural contexts? Are there different ways to know the body? How can we look cross-culturally at what it means to heal? What are the implications of social, political and historical contexts for the health of individuals and larger societies? Come prepared for an open discussion!

Key Readings


Sargent, C. and Larchanché, S. 2009. ‘The Construction of “Cultural Difference” and Its Therapeutic Significance in Immigrant Mental Health Services in France’, *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 33(1): 2-20


Further Reading


Taylor, J. S. 2003. ‘The Story Catches You and You Fall Down: Tragedy, Ethnography, and “Cultural Competence”’, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 17(2): 159-181


**Week 2: Interpreting Illness**

Following on from our initial introduction, this week will explore the importance of narratives in medical anthropology. What does it mean to understand health and illness from the ‘patient’s’ point of view? What is the difference between illness and disease, and what impact might this have on the patient’s experience? How has this informed approaches to studying sickness and medicine?

**Key Readings**

Kleinman, A. 1988. ‘The Personal and Social Meanings of Illness’ in The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing & the Human Condition. New York: Basic Books [You are strongly encouraged to read the whole book, although it is not required reading for this week]


**Further Reading**


Week 3: Problems with Power

Taking a step back from the patient’s perspective, this lecture will introduce students to more critical approaches to medical anthropology. How do larger social, political, and economic structures shape experiences of sickness and healing? We will discuss how anthropologists have studied issues of power, marginalization, inequality, and violence in the context of health and illness.

Key Readings


Further Reading

Han, C. 2004. ‘The Work of Indebtedness: the Traumatic Present of Late Capitalist Chile’, Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry. Special Issue: Cultures of Trauma 28(2): 169-187


**Week 4: The Body in Medical Anthropology**

Is the body universal? When is a body not a body? Is it a complete being or a sum of parts? And where do minds and souls fit in? Confused? The body is a crucial site throughout anthropology, and this lecture will examine the ways in which it has been approached by medical anthropology. We will discuss how different understandings of the body – as the self, a possession, a tool – inform and are informed by understandings of what it means to be sick or healthy, and alive or dead. What is the significance of bodies, as part of a larger political or social body?

**Key Readings**


Lock, M. and Nguyen, V-K. ‘Chapter 2: The Normal Body’ AND ‘Chapter 4: Local Biologies and Human Difference’ in *An Anthropology of Biomedicine*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell [available online through the library]

**Further Reading**


Emotion plays an important role in health. Having too much -- or not enough -- of some emotions is linked to mental or physical illness. But while emotions are partly shaped by human evolution, anthropologists and historians have discovered cross-cultural differences in how people talk about and perhaps even experience emotion. This class investigates these differences and their implications for health and illness, focusing on the case study of one particular emotion: sadness.

**Key Reading**

Obeyesekere, G. "Depression, Buddhism, and the Work of Culture in Sri Lanka" in A. Kleinman and B. Good (eds.) *Culture and Depression*.

Rosaldo, M. "Knowledge, passion, and the heart" in M. Rosaldo *Knowledge and passion: Ilongot notions of self and social life*


**Preparation for class:**

Read online some illness narratives written by people with depression. There are several sources for these stories. Try discussion fora, patient support groups, or depression education organizations (see links below). Pick one or two stories that particularly interest or move you. Then write 2 paragraphs in response to the following questions (bring what you wrote to class and be ready to discuss it):
Discuss your chosen illness narratives in light of the week’s readings and in particular Obeyesekere’s argument that “What is called depression (in whatever form) is also invariably associated with psychosocial and cultural conditions (p.150).” Do you agree or disagree with him?

What particular “cultural conditions” – if any -- are revealed in your patient narratives?

Three sources of patient stories about depression:

The black dog institute: http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/personalstories/depression.cfm


Further Reading


Week 6: Plastic bodies (Alex Edmonds)

As medicine has progressed technologically, more therapies have been invented that not only heal or prevent disease, but make people “better than well” by enhancing biological capacities. But who decides what is “well enough”? So-called medical enhancement raises important ethical questions about health risks, the medicalization of new areas of life, and tinkering with human nature. The lecture explores these questions through an ethnographic case study of plastic surgery in Brazil.

Key Readings


http://sex.sagepub.com/content/8/4/407.short

Preparation for class

You’ve read about 4 different kinds of genital cutting:

1) Male circumcision

2) Female “circumcision” (genital cutting)

3) Surgical correction of ambiguous genitals in infants

4) Cosmetic genital surgery

Now, imagine that you, as an expert anthropologist, have miraculously been empowered by the NHS to regulate these procedures. Write 1 page (total) discussing how you would regulate each of these 4 procedures and why. Be prepared to justify your proposal in class. Questions you might consider:

- Which procedures, if any, should be performed with public funds?
• Would you devote scarce health resources to educational campaigns and if so what would the message be?

• Would you ban any of the procedures or encourage prosecution of parents who had them done to their children?

• Would your regulatory approach take into account cultural beliefs of different ethnic groups?

**Further Readings**


**Week 7: Culture, Gender and Sexuality**

This week will explore how understandings of gender and sexuality have informed and been informed by concepts of health and healing. What are the roles of healers and healing in shaping what it means to be or have a gendered body? How do perceptions of gender shape perceptions of pain, illness, and suffering in different cultural contexts, and how does this impact on access to and uptake of different therapeutic models? How has medical anthropology helped to bring feminism to the fore?

**Key Readings**


**Further Reading**

Inhorn, M. I. ‘Defining Women’s Health: A Dozen Messages from more than 150 Ethnographies’ *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 20(3): 345-378


Kuan, C. 2014. “’Suffering Twice’: The Gender Politics of Cesarean Sections in Taiwan’ *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 28(3): 399-418


Staples, J. 2011. ‘At the Intersection of Disability and Masculinity: Exploring Gender and Bodily Difference in India’ *JRAI* 17(3): 545-562

Wickström, A. 2010. ‘Virginity testing as a local public health initiative: a ‘preventive ritual’ more than a ‘diagnostic measure” *JRAI* 16(3): 532-550

**Week 8: Healing and Healers**

Interactions between patients and healers in different cultural settings are a core aspect of the ethnographic study of health and illness. This lecture will engage students with the array of questions that such research can pose. What does it mean to heal? Who has the ability to heal? Who defines what it means to be healthy or unwell? What does it mean to be an expert? Who has control of the knowledge and artefacts of healing? Where do such interactions take place – in public? In private? How can we think about healing as performative?

**Key Readings**

Tiilikainen, M. 2012. ‘It’s Just Like the Internet: Transnational Healing Practices between Somaliland and the Somali Diaspora’ in H. Dilger, A. Kane, and S. A. Langwick (eds), Medicine, Mobility, and Power in Global Africa. Indiana: Indiana University Press


Further Reading


Keshet, Y. and Popper-Giveon, A. 2013. ‘Integrative Health Care in Israel and Traditional Arab Herbal Medicine: When Health Care Interfaces with Culture and Politics’ Medical Anthropology Quarterly 27(3): 368-384


Week 9: Making up People (Alex Edmonds)

This lecture introduces students to the field of the anthropology of mental health by analyzing the development of a new illness model over the last three decades: post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). We explore cross-cultural differences in treating afflictions of the mind or spirit that come
in the wake of violence. We also consider the implications of the spread of Western psychiatry to other parts of the world. A key question we address is whether psychiatric diagnoses “make up” -- in philosopher Ian Hacking’s words -- new kinds of people?

**Key Reading**


**Further Reading**


**Week 10: Anthropology of care**

Care is an emergent issue in medical anthropology, but what does it mean in different cultural contexts? What is the relationship between care and concepts of responsibility and risk? This lecture will explore different actors in the administration and management of care, including families, communities, medical professionals and the state. We will also explore the concept of self-care as a healing strategy.

**Key Readings**


**Further Reading**


Taylor, J. S. 2008. ‘On Recognition, Caring, and Dementia’ *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 22(4): 313-335


Fainzang, S. 2013. ‘The Other Side of Medicalization: Self-Medicalization and Self-Medication’, *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 37(3): 488-504


ASSESSMENT

The course will be assessed by two components.

The first is a 1500 word short essay, submitted part way through the course, worth 20% of the final mark. Details below. **The short essay must be handed in before 12 noon on Tuesday 14\textsuperscript{th} of October.**

The second is a 3000 word essay to be submitted after the end of the course, worth 80% of the final mark. Long essay titles will be provided in the second half of the course. **Long essays must be handed in before 12 noon on Wednesday 3\textsuperscript{rd} of December.**

**Short Essay**

Select a current or recent story or event, which has been covered in the media, that relates to the topics discussed in this course (i.e. medicine, illness, healing). Write an essay discussing how the use of narratives.

In answering this question you are being asked to examine how issues of sickness and healing are framed within the media. You can focus on a single media source or use multiple media sources in order to compare and contrast, however you are not required to include an exhaustive list.

Ask some of the following sub-questions:

- How is illness/health/healing framed?
- Are individual narratives of illness or healing featured?
- Are particular causes or remedies discussed?
- Is/are source(s) about a particular place, population, or time period?

Students should refer to a minimum of four readings. All sources should be referenced, including any newspapers, websites, TV features, etc.

**Assessment Criteria for Short Essay**

1. Development and coherence of arguments
2. Demonstration of an advanced and critical understanding of relevant key debates relating to medical anthropology as discussed on the course
3. Use of supporting evidence
4. Degree of reflexivity and critical thinking in relation to arguments and evidence
5. Drawing together major arguments by way of conclusion in relation to the assignment
6. Formal presentation of report: correct referencing and quoting; spelling, grammar and style; layout and visual presentation.
Word Count Penalties:

Your short essay should be between 1000 and 1500 words (including footnotes, excluding bibliography). Essays above 1500 words will be penalised using the Ordinary level criterion of 1 mark for every 20 words over length: anything between 1501 and 1520 words will lose one mark, between 1521 and 1540 two marks, and so on. The same penalties apply to the long essay.

You will not be penalised for submitting work below the word limit. However, you should note that shorter essays are unlikely to achieve the required depth and that this will be reflected in your mark.

Learning Resources for Undergraduates:

The Study Development Team at the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) provides resources and workshops aimed at helping all students to enhance their learning skills and develop effective study techniques. Resources and workshops cover a range of topics, such as managing your own learning, reading, note making, essay and report writing, exam preparation and exam techniques.

The study development resources are housed on 'LearnBetter' (undergraduate), part of Learn, the University's virtual learning environment. Follow the link from the IAD Study Development web page to enrol: www.ed.ac.uk/iad/undergraduates

Workshops are interactive: they will give you the chance to take part in activities, have discussions, exchange strategies, share ideas and ask questions. They are 90 minutes long and held on Wednesday afternoons at 1.30pm or 3.30pm. The schedule is available from the IAD Undergraduate web page (see above).

Workshops are open to all undergraduates but you need to book in advance, using the MyEd booking system. Each workshop opens for booking 2 weeks before the date of the workshop itself. If you book and then cannot attend, please cancel in advance through MyEd so that another student can have your place. (To be fair to all students, anyone who persistently books on workshops and fails to attend may be barred from signing up for future events).

Study Development Advisors are also available for an individual consultation if you have specific questions about your own approach to studying, working more effectively, strategies for improving your learning and your academic work. Please note, however, that
Study Development Advisors are not subject specialists so they cannot comment on the content of your work. They also do not check or proof read students' work.

To make an appointment with a Study Development Advisor, email iad.study@ed.ac.uk

(For support with English Language, you should contact the English Language Teaching Centre).

**Discussing Sensitive Topics:**

The discipline of Medical Anthropology addresses a number of topics that some might find sensitive or, in some cases, distressing. You should read this handbook carefully and if there are any topics that you may feel distressed by you should seek advice from the course convenor and/or your Personal Tutor.

For more general issues you may consider seeking the advice of the Student Counselling Service, http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-counselling

**Plagiarism Guidance for Students:**

**Avoiding Plagiarism:**

Material you submit for assessment, such as your essays, must be your own work. You can, and should, draw upon published work, ideas from lectures and class discussions, and (if appropriate) even upon discussions with other students, but you must always make clear that you are doing so. Passing off anyone else's work (including another student's work or material from the Web or a published author) as your own is plagiarism and will be punished severely. When you upload your work to ELMA you will be asked to check a box to confirm the work is your own. ELMA automatically runs all submissions through ‘Turnitin’, our plagiarism detection software, and compares every essay against a constantly-updated database, which highlights all plagiarised work. Assessed work that contains plagiarised material will be awarded a mark of zero, and serious cases of plagiarism will also be reported to the College Academic Misconduct officer. In either case, the actions taken will be noted permanently on the student's record. For further details on plagiarism see the Academic Services’ website:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/students/undergraduate/discipline/plagiarism
ELMA: Submission and return of coursework

Coursework is submitted online using our electronic submission system, ELMA. You will not be required to submit a paper copy of your work.

Marked coursework, grades and feedback will be returned to you via ELMA. You will not receive a paper copy of your marked coursework or feedback.

For information, help and advice on submitting coursework and accessing feedback, please see the ELMA wiki at https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SPSITWiki/ELMA. Further detailed guidance on the essay deadline and a link to the wiki and submission page will be available on the course Learn page. The wiki is the primary source of information on how to submit your work correctly and provides advice on approved file formats, uploading cover sheets and how to name your files correctly.

When you submit your work electronically, you will be asked to tick a box confirming that your work complies with university regulations on plagiarism. This confirms that the work you have submitted is your own.

Occasionally, there can be technical problems with a submission. We request that you monitor your university student email account in the 24 hours following the deadline for submitting your work. If there are any problems with your submission the course secretary will email you at this stage.

We undertake to return all coursework within 15 working days of submission. This time is needed for marking, moderation, second marking and input of results. If there are any unanticipated delays, it is the course organiser's responsibility to inform you of the reasons.

All our coursework is assessed anonymously to ensure fairness: to facilitate this process put your Examination number (on your student card), not your name or student number, on your coursework or cover sheet.

Return of Feedback:

Feedback for coursework will be returned online via ELMA on 28/10/14
The Operation of Lateness Penalties (Honours Students):

Unlike in Years 1 and 2, **NO EXTENSIONS ARE GRANTED WITH RESPECT TO THE SUBMISSION DEADLINES FOR ANY ASSESSED WORK AT HONOURS LEVEL.**

Managing deadlines is a basic life-skill that you are expected to have acquired by the time you reach Honours. Timely submission of all assessed items (coursework, essays, project reports, etc.) is a vitally important responsibility at this stage in your university career. Unexcused lateness can put at risk your prospects of proceeding to Senior Honours and can damage your final degree grade.

If you miss the submission deadline for any piece of assessed work 5 marks will be deducted for each calendar day that work is late, up to a maximum of five calendar days (25 marks). Thereafter, a mark of zero will be recorded. There is no grace period for lateness and penalties begin to apply immediately following the deadline. For example, if the deadline is Tuesday at 12 noon, work submitted on Tuesday at 12.01pm will be marked as one day late, work submitted at 12.01pm on Wednesday will be marked as two days late, and so on.

Failure to submit an item of assessed work will result in a mark of zero, with potentially very serious consequences for your overall degree class, or no degree at all. It is therefore always in your interest to submit work, even if very late.

Please be aware that all work submitted is returned to students with a provisional mark and without applicable penalties in the first instance. The mark you receive on ELMA is therefore subject to change following the consideration of the Lateness Penalty Waiver Panel (please see below for further information) and the Board of Examiners.

How to Submit a Lateness Penalty Waiver Form (Honours Students):

If there are extenuating circumstances beyond your control which make it essential for you to submit work after the deadline you must fill in a ‘Lateness Penalty Waiver’ (LPW) form to state the reason for your lateness. This is a request for any applicable penalties to be removed and will be considered by the Lateness Penalty Waiver Panel.

Before submitting an LPW, please consider carefully whether your circumstances are (or were) significant enough to justify the lateness. Such circumstances should be serious and exceptional (e.g. not a common cold or a heavy workload). Computer failures are not regarded as justifiable reason for late submission. You are expected to regularly back-up your work and allow sufficient time for uploading it to ELMA.

You should submit the LPW form and supply an expected date of submission as soon as you are able to do so, and preferably before the deadline. Depending on the circumstances,
supporting documentation may be required, so please be prepared to provide this where possible.

LPW forms can be found in a folder outside your SSO’s office, on online at:

http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/undergrad/on_course_students/assessment_and_regulations/coursework_requirements/coursework_requirements_honours

Forms should be returned by email or, if possible, in person to your SSO. They will sign the form to indicate receipt and will be able to advise you if you would like further guidance or support.

Please Note: Signing the LPW form by either your SSO or Personal Tutor only indicates acknowledgment of the request, not the waiving of lateness penalties. Final decisions on all marks rest with Examination Boards.

There is a dedicated SSO for students in each subject area in SPS. To find out who your SSO is, and how to contact them, please find your home subject area on the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Name of SSO</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Office</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>Ruth Winkle</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ruth.winkle@ed.ac.uk">ruth.winkle@ed.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>0131 650 4253</td>
<td>Room 1.11, Chrystal MacMillan Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Relations</td>
<td>Rebecca Shade</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rebecca.shade@ed.ac.uk">rebecca.shade@ed.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>0131 651 3896</td>
<td>Room 1.10, Chrystal MacMillan Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Anthropology</td>
<td>Vanessa Feldberg</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vanessa.feldberg@ed.ac.uk">vanessa.feldberg@ed.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>0131 650 3933</td>
<td>Room 1.04, Chrystal MacMillan Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Policy</td>
<td>Louise Angus</td>
<td><a href="mailto:L.Angus@ed.ac.uk">L.Angus@ed.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>0131 650 3923</td>
<td>Room 1.08, Chrystal MacMillan Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>Jane Marshall</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jane.marshall@ed.ac.uk">jane.marshall@ed.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>0131 650 3912</td>
<td>Room 1.07, Chrystal</td>
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</table>
If you are a student from another School, you should submit your LPW to the SSO for the subject area of the course, (Vanessa Feldberg)

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<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>Karen Dargo</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Karen.Dargo@ed.ac.uk">Karen.Dargo@ed.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>0131 651</td>
<td>Room 1.03,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Development</td>
<td>Sue Renton</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sue.renton@ed.ac.uk">sue.renton@ed.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>0131 650</td>
<td>Room 1.09,</td>
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