

**Anthropological Perspectives on AIDS**  
**Wright State University**  
**Department of Anthropology and Sociology**

Dr. Robert G. Carlson  
ANT 399/599  
Tuesday 7:00 p.m.-9:50 p.m.  
Spring 1992

**Course Description:**

*"Our world has been made a different place by the human immunodeficiency virus. More profoundly, our society is being shaped by our response to the epidemic."--Fineberg 1988*

The Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) pandemic is now more than a decade old. Worldwide, the WHO estimates that there have been almost 1 million cases of AIDS; another 8-10 million people have been infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The HIV is spreading rapidly in Latin America and Southeast Asia; it is estimated that up to 1 million people in India have been infected with the HIV. The U.S. Bureau of the Census has recently projected that up to 70 million people in Africa alone will be HIV infected by 2015.

This course is designed to present a broad overview of the contributions that anthropologists have made to understanding AIDS as a cultural phenomenon. Particular emphasis will be placed on the ways by which anthropological knowledge of the cultural context of "risk behaviors" have been translated into interventions designed to reduce the transmission of the HIV.

The course begins with introductory overviews of theories of the origin(s) of the HIV, the etiology of AIDS, and its epidemiology. We then focus on particular issues including AIDS and the Gay communities, sex research, AIDS in Africa and Latin America, the interrelationships among intravenous drug use, crack use, and HIV transmission, and AIDS, ethnicity, and women. Although the course is global in scope, some emphasis will be placed on AIDS in the United States and in Africa where the instructor has conducted field research. The course is designed for students in the health and social sciences, but there are no prerequisites.

**Required Texts:**

1. Herdt, G., and S. Lindenbaum, eds. *The Time of AIDS: Social Analysis, Theory and Method*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992.
2. Feldman, Douglas A., ed. *Culture and AIDS*. New York: Praeger, 1990.
3. A set of supplementary readings available at Kinko's.

(All required readings are on reserve in the main library.)

**Course Requirements:**

The course will be conducted as a seminar, combining lecture and discussion. It is essential for all students to have the assigned readings completed well before class to facilitate discussion. We will take one 10-15 minute break during the evening.

Grades will be determined approximately as follows:

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| 1. Class participation                 | 20% |
| 2. Presentations                       | 20% |
| 3. Mid-term exam (May 5)               | 25% |
| 4. Final exam (June 9, 7:45-9:45 p.m.) | 35% |

Each student will be required to prepare 1-2 reading assignments for class presentation during the quarter. Presentations should include both a summary of the main points and a preparation of questions for discussion.

**Graduate Students:**

In addition to the above requirements, graduate students will be expected to complete a research paper of no less than 15 pages. Guidelines for the research paper will be provided by the instructor. Graduate students must discuss their proposed research topic with the instructor during office hours (or by appointment) no later than the fourth week of class.

Grades will be assigned based on the following standard scale:

A=90-100% (excellent); B=80-89% (above average); C=70-79% (average); D=60-69% (below average); F<60% (failing)

**Lecture Schedule and Reading Assignments**

**Introduction and Course Overview (video on Outreach)**

**Explanations of the Origin(s) of the HIV and the Etiology of AIDS**

Gallo, Robert, and Luc Montagnier. "AIDS in 1988." *Scientific American* 259(4):41-48, 1988.  
Hamburg, Margaret A., and Anthony S. Fauci. "AIDS: The Challenge to Biomedical Research." *Daedalus* 118(2):19-39,

1989.

Essex, Max, and Phyllis J. Kanki. "The Origins of the AIDS Virus." *Scientific American* 259(4):64-71, 1988.

Feldman, D. "Introduction: Culture and AIDS." (Feldman, ch. 1)

Moore, Alexander, and Ronald D. Le Baron. "The Case for a Haitian Origin of the AIDS Epidemic." In *The Social Dimensions of AIDS: Method and Theory*. Douglas A. Feldman and Thomas M. Johnson, eds. Pp. 77-93. New York: Praeger, 1987.

### **The Epidemiology of AIDS**

Mann, Jonathan M., James Chin, Peter Piot, and Thomas Quinn. "The International Epidemiology of AIDS." *Scientific American* 259(4):82-89, 1988.

Palca, Joseph. "The Sobering Geography of AIDS." *Science* 252:372-373, 1991.

Heyward, William L., and James W. Curran. "The Epidemiology of AIDS in the U.S." *Scientific American* 259(4):72-81, 1988.

Armelagos, George J., Mary Ryan, and Thomas Leatherman. "Evolution of Infectious Disease: A Biocultural Analysis of AIDS." *American Journal of Human Biology* 2:353-363, 1990.

McCombie, S. "AIDS in Cultural, Historic, and Epidemiologic Context." (Feldman, ch. 2)

### **The Cultural Construction of AIDS**

Herdt, G. "Introduction." (H and L, ch. 1)

Treichler. "AIDS, HIV, and the Cultural Construction of Reality." (H and L, ch. 4)

Clatts, Michael C., and Kevin M. Mutchler. "AIDS and the Dangerous Other: Metaphors of Sex and Deviance in the Representation of Disease." *Medical Anthropology* 10:105-114, 1989.

Abramson. "Sex, Lies, and Ethnography." (H and L, ch. 5)

### **AIDS and the Gay Communities**

Quam. "The Sick Role, Stigma, and Pollution: The Case of AIDS." (Feldman, ch. 3)

Lang. "Sex, Politics, and Guilt: A Study of Homophobia and the AIDS Phenomenon." (Feldman, ch. 11)

Levine. "The Implications of Constructionist Theory for Social Research on the AIDS Epidemic Among Gay Men." (H and L, ch. 8)

Bolton. "Mapping Terra Incognita: Sex Research for AIDS Prevention--An Urgent Agenda for the 1990s." (H and L, ch. 6)

Kotarba, Joseph A., and Norris G. Lang. "Gay Lifestyle Change and AIDS: Preventive Health Care." In *The Social Dimensions of AIDS: Method and Theory*. Douglas A. Feldman and Thomas M. Johnson, eds. Pp. 127-143. New York: Praeger, 1987.

### **AIDS in Latin America (Mid-term exam)**

Parker. "Sexual Diversity, Cultural Analysis, and AIDS Education in Brazil." (H and L, ch. 10)

Carrier and Magana. "Use of Ethnosexual Data on Men of Mexican Origin for HIV/AIDS Prevention Programs." (H and L, ch. 11)

Farmer. "AIDS and Accusation: Haiti, Haitians, and the Geography of Blame." (Feldman, ch. 6)

Farmer. "New Disorder, Old Dilemmas: AIDS and Anthropology in Haiti." (H and L, ch. 13)

### **AIDS in Africa**

Feldman. "Assessing Viral, Parasitic, and Sociocultural Cofactors Affecting HIV-1 Transmission in Rwanda." (Feldman, ch. 4)

Bongaarts, John, Priscilla Reining, Peter Way, and Francis Conant. "The Relationship Between Male Circumcision and HIV Infection in African Populations." *AIDS* 3:373-377, 1989.

Larson, Ann. "Social Context of Human Immunodeficiency Virus Transmission in Africa: Historical and Cultural Bases of East and Central African Sexual Relations." *Reviews of Infectious Diseases* 11(5):716-731, 1989.

Schoepf. "Women at Risk: Case Studies from Zaire." (H and L, ch. 12)

Taylor. "AIDS and the Pathogenesis of Metaphor." (Feldman, ch. 5)

### **AIDS, Intravenous Drug Use, and Crack Cocaine**

Carlson, Siegal, and Falck. "Ethnography, Epidemiology, and Public Policy: Needle Use Practices and Risk Reduction among IV Drug Users in the Midwest." In *Global AIDS Policy*. Douglas A. Feldman, ed. 1989. (In review)

Kane and Mason. "'IV Drug Users' and 'Sex Partners': The Limits of Epidemiological Categories and the Ethnography of Risk." (H and L, ch. 9)

Singer, M., R. Irizarry, and J. J. Schensul. "Needle Access as an AIDS Prevention Strategy for IV Drug Users: A Research Perspective." *Human Organization* 50(2):142-153.

Carlson and Siegal. "The Crack Life: An Ethnographic Overview of Crack Use and Sexual Behavior Among African Americans in a Midwest Metropolitan City." *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 23(1):11-20, 1991. (Handout)

### **Guest Lecture: Mr. Riki Foster, Outreach Worker II (video: AIDS: A Message from the Midwest)**

### **AIDS, Ethnicity, and Women**

Day. "Prostitute Women and the Ideology of Work in London." (Feldman, ch. 7)

Berridge (recommended). "AIDS: History and Contemporary History." (H and L, ch. 3)

Worth. "Minority Women and AIDS: Culture, Race, and Gender." (Feldman, ch. 8)

Quimby. "Anthropological Witnessing for African Americans: Power, Responsibility, and Choice in the Age of AIDS." (H and L, ch. 7)

Dalton, Harlon L. "AIDS in Blackface." *Daedalus* 118(3):205-227, 1989.

Singer, Merrill. "Confronting the AIDS Epidemic Among IV Drug Users: Does Ethnic Culture Matter?" *AIDS Education and*

**Politics, Ethics, and Policy**

Leap. "Language and AIDS." (Feldman, ch. 9)

Nardi. "AIDS and Obituaries: The Perpetuation of Stigma in the Press." (Feldman, ch. 10)

Niehaus. "Increasing the Cost of Living: Class and Exploitation in the Delivery of Social Services to Persons with AIDS." (Feldman, ch. 12)

Gagnon. "Epidemics and Researchers: AIDS and the Practice of Social Studies." (H and L, ch. 2)

Lindenbaum. "Knowledge and Action in the Shadow of AIDS." (H and L, ch. 14)

Feldman. "Postscript: Anthropology and AIDS." (Feldman, ch. 13)