

ANTHRO 149- HEALTH, POWER, & INEQUALITY
Fall 2020

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Course Description

Health and disease are unevenly distributed across populations and profoundly shaped by our social, economic, and political circumstances. In this course, we will study the complex interactions among biology, ideology, and structures of power and inequality in the construction of our embodied experiences of health, healing, and illness. Topics covered include poverty, war, disability, racism, mass incarceration, homelessness, substance use, organ transplantation, and the COVID-19 pandemic. By the end of this class, students will be able to apply a critical medical anthropological perspective to the pressing local, national, and global health issues of our milieu.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 0 (Oct 1): Introduction to the Class

No readings assigned.

WEEK 1 (Oct 6-8): A Critical Medical Anthropology of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Paul Farmer, "Infections and inequalities: The modern plagues" (Introduction & chapter 2).

Documentary: Unnatural causes: Is inequality making us sick? (episode 1)
<https://ucla.kanopy.com/video/sickness-and-wealth>

WEEK 2 (Oct 13-15): Health, Political Economy, and Structural Violence

Nancy Scheper-Hughes, "Death without weeping: The violence of everyday life in Brazil" (excerpts) & "No more angel babies on Alto do Cruzeiro."

Documentary: Sicko
<https://vimeo.com/76646445>

Week 3 (Oct 20-22): Why Black Lives Matter? Race, Racism, and Health

Clarence Gravlee, "How race becomes biology: Embodiment of social inequality."

Documentary: Race: The power of an illusion (episode 1)
<https://ucla.kanopy.com/video/race-power-illusion-0>

Week 4 (Oct 27-29): Social Suffering in Segregated US Cities

Philippe Bourgois, "Homelessness, addiction, and politically structured suffering in the US war on drugs."

Guest speaker: Philippe Bourgois (UCLA)

Week 5 (Nov 3-5): Mental Health in a Carceral State

Liat Ben-Moshe, "Why prisons are not 'the new asylums'."

Documentary: The new asylums
<https://www.pbs.org/video/frontline-new-asylums/>

Guest speaker: Liat Ben Moshe (University of Illinois, Chicago)

Week 6 (Nov 10-12): Costs of War

Ken MacLeish, "Damaged and deserving: On care in a veteran treatment court."

Guest speaker: Ken MacLeish (Vanderbilt University)

Week 7 (Nov 17-19): Politics of Organ Transplantation

Sherine Hamdy, "When the state and your kidneys fail: Political etiologies in an Egyptian dialysis ward."

Guest speaker: Sherine Hamdy (UC Irvine)

Week 8 (Nov 24): Migration, Labor, and Health

Seth Holmes, "Fresh fruit, broken bodies: Migrant farmworkers in the United States" (chapters 4 & 5)

Documentary: Food Chains
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-k4c6QdCJi4>

Guest speaker: Seth Holmes (UC Berkeley)

Week 9 (Dec 1,3): Disability in the Global South

Stephen Meyers, "Rethinking citizenship, self-help, and disability in local context: Solidaridad as disability citizenship in Nicaragua."

Guest speaker: Stephen Meyers (University of Washington)

Week 10 (Dec 8, 10): Global Inequalities, Global Health

Ippolytos Kalofonos, "All I eat is ARVs': The paradox of AIDS treatment interventions in central Mozambique."

Documentary: Bending the arc (available on course website)

Guest speaker: Ippolytos Kalofonos (UCLA)