

SMITH COLLEGE

Anthropology 248a

MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Fall 2003

M W 11:00 a.m.-12:10 p.m.

Seelye 311

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Office Hours: M 10-11:00 a.m., W 2:30-3:30 p.m.,

And by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Evidence from diverse societies demonstrates that the human experience of sickness entails a complex interplay between biological, socio-economic and cultural factors. The course begins with a powerful account of suffering to bring us to the heart of all medical systems. Then, an exploration of a cholera epidemic introduces the core frameworks and concepts by which anthropologists analyze sickness.

The second part of the course further develops two important research models in medical anthropology, the "interpretive" or "ethnomedical" model and the "critical" or "political-economy" model.

The class continues with a look at the application of medical anthropology to the resolution of health problems, internationally and in the United States. Objections to "applied medical anthropology" are discussed.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The following books are available at the Smith Bookstore:

- 1) Fadiman, A. The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down
(1997, Farrar, Straus and Giroux).
- 2) Joralemon, D. Exploring Medical Anthropology (1999, Allyn
and Bacon).
- 3) Kidder, T. Mountains Beyond Mountains (2003, Random).
- 4) Murphy, R. The Body Silent (1987, Holt).

There is a packet of supplemental readings available at Copycat Print Shop, 32 Pleasant St., Northampton.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

PART I: TOWARD AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF SUFFERING

Anthropological Reflections on Sickness and Healing

(Sept 8, 10, 15)

1. Murphy, entire.
2. Joralemon, pp. xiii-30.

Perspectives in Medical Anthropology:

A. Evolutionary and Ecological Models (Sept.17, 22, 24)

1. Joralemon, pp. 31-44.
2. Mascie-Taylor, C. "The Biological Anthropology of Disease" (see course packet).
3. Cohen, M. "Behavior and Health," "The History of Infectious Disease," and "Changes in the Human Diet" (see course packet).

B. Critical and Interpretive Models (Sept. 29, Oct. 1, 6, 8)

1. Joralemon, pp. 45-59.
2. Farmer, P. Infections and Inequalities, pp. 18-36, 59-93 (see course packet).

--- In Class Exam, Oct. 15 ---

PART II: HEALERS AND THE HEALING PROFESSIONS

Concepts for Understanding Healing Roles Across Cultures

(Oct. 20)

1. Joralemon, 61-79.
2. Begin Fadiman, pp. 1-119.

A Case Study in Medicine Across Cultures

(Oct. 22, 27, 29)

1. Finish Fadiman.
2. Taylor, J., "The Story Catches You and You Fall Down"
(see course packet).
3. Film: "Hmong Shaman in America."

Situating Biomedical Knowledge and Practice (Nov. 3, 5)

1. Good, B. and M. DelVecchio Good, "Learning Medicine"
(see course packet).
2. Rapp, R., "Extra Chromosomes and Blue Chips" (see
course packet).

Shamans (Nov. 10, 12)

1. Joralemon, "Shamanism" (see course packet).
2. Kendall, L. "The Cultural Politics of 'Superstition' in the Korean Shaman World"(see course
packet).
3. Film: "Eduardo, The Healer." [in class, Nov. 10]

PART III: HEALTH, POVERTY AND THE ANTHROPOLOGIST'S RESPONSIBILITY

Medical Anthropologists in International and Domestic Health Care

(Nov. 17, 19)

1. Joralemon, pp. 81-100.

2. Individual reading selections (see “Assignments”).
3. Begin, Kidder.
4. Film: “Anthropologists at Work” (selection).

The Doctor/Anthropologist: A Crusade for the Poor

(Nov. 24, Dec. 1, 3)

1. Kidder, entire.
2. Singer, “Beyond the Ivory Tower” (see course packet).

Anthropology and Medical Ethics (Dec. 8, 10)

1. Joralemon, pp.101-126.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There are five requirements for the course:

- 1) Attendance and participation in class discussions. Repeated unexcused absences will result in grade reductions.
- 2) Response paper to The Body Silent (2-3 pages, due September 17). This is an ungraded but required paper.
- 3) In-class exam (Oct. 15) on terms and concepts.
- 4) Reading report (written) based on a student-selected article related to applied medical anthropology. Half the class will look for an article related to an international applied project and the other half will find one related to a domestic project. Selections must be approved by the professor no later than Nov. 13 and should be no more than five years old (i.e., no earlier than 1996). Articles are most likely to be found in: Medical Anthropology, Medical Anthropology Quarterly, or Human Organization. The report is due in class on Nov. 24.

5) Writing assignments based on the Fadiman and Kidder texts. Students select one book for a 2-3 page response paper; the other text will be the subject of a longer paper (7-10 pages) based on instructions to be distributed in class. The Fadiman papers (short and long) are due on Nov. 3. The Kidder papers (short and long) are due on Dec. 10.

Grading Proportions: The in-class exam and the writing assignments are evenly weighted; the reading report, class attendance and participation in discussions may raise or lower a borderline grade.

Please Note:

The quality of your writing matters! You are encouraged to consult with a Writing Counselor at the Jacobson Center (Seelye 307).

Please exercise extreme caution on all written work to avoid even the appearance of plagiarism. Special care should be taken with paraphrases that do nothing more than substitute synonyms while maintaining the original source's basic sentence structure. If you have any doubts about proper citation methods, either talk with me directly or consult with a writing counselor.

Late papers are penalized. Papers must be delivered to me personally; papers may not be mailed, faxed, sent as an email attachment, or left at my office when I am not there.

PLEASE, TURN OFF CELL PHONES DURING CLASS