**Global Biocultures: Anthropological Perspectives on Public Health**

**ANTH-UA 36 Fall 2018**

*Helena Hansen, MD, Ph.D. Course Assistant:*

*25 Waverly Place room 608 Saudi Garcia*

[*helena.hansen@nyu.edu*](mailto:helena.hansen@nyu.edu)sg4442@nyu.edu

*(212) 998-8189 Available Mondays 2-3PM*

*Office Hours: Wednesdays 5-6PM and by appointment*

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**Course Description:**

This course surveys the mutual shaping of culture and biology in diverse contexts around the world. Drawing on sociocultural theories of biocultural process, and ethnographies of embodiment, illness, disability, drugs, violence, and biotechnology, we will examine the relationship of larger political economic structures to individual subjectivities, and examine biological experience as simultaneously material and socioculturally plastic.

This seminar is experimental. We will review classical and contemporary scholarship from medical anthropology, medical sociology and science studies in order to foster creative thinking about the relationship between biology and culture. We will also screen and discuss films related to biocultures. The films are not to be taken at face value but rather are to be analyzed as artifacts that reflect a collective imagination about biology and culture.

**Requirements:**

* Attend all course meetings, complete the readings, view the films, and contribute to discussion. On one occasion during the semester, each student will present 3 minutes of commentary based on their short reading paper (see below) and a biocultural event or artifact related to that week’s assigned reading. Commentators for a given course meeting will meet outside of class to select a biocultural event from news headlines, historical accounts, youtube or other sources, and come up with discussion questions. Participation is 25% of the final grade.
* Do the course readings and post a response on Classes before midnight the Sunday of each week. The response should be 200-400 words long and pose questions or comments from the readings and film for discussion in class. Feel free to respond to other postings but it is not required. Responses make up 25% of the final grade.

Useful questions to ask yourself while reading and posting include:

* What is the biocultural argument here?
* How does it relate to other versions of the “biocultural” that we have studied? What does it add to our analytic toolbox?
* What is at stake in the argument? That is, who is the author addressing and for what purpose? To which controversies, policies or social trends is the author reacting?
* What are the author’s strategies of argument in using data and undertaking an analysis?
* What do you find are the strengths, weaknesses, and potential uses of the author’s argument? How would you have argued differently?
* Two 3-4 page\* **extended reading response papers** that ask you to contrast and apply the theoretical frameworks presented earlier in the course with that covered on the day you select for your extended response paper. You may use the same framing questions as listed above, but go into more depth in your response and use standard essay format (with thesis statement, supporting paragraphs, and conclusion), providing citations. You will make a 3 minute presentation based on your extended reading response paper and your group’s biocultural event or artifact (see above) in class on the day to which you are assigned. A sign up list for dates will be circulated in class. This is 25% of the final grade.
* One **final project** in which you will research a topic of biocultural controversy and develop a website on that topic with 7-8 pages\* of text not including images. The website should draw on the theories discussed in class. You must submit a paragraph length proposal for your topic by November 3 explaining the topic, thesis statement or question, and data sources (e.g. interviews, films, artifacts). You will have technical support for uploading the website from Bobst Library staff. You may work as a team if each team member develops a sub-section of a website that is 7-8 pages in length. Each person will make a 5 minute presentation of their weblink in the last two weeks of class. This is 25% of the final grade.

*\* Double spaced 12 point font with 1 inch margins*

**Course Book:**

Eric ManheimerTwelve Patients: Life and Death at Bellevue Hospital

Articles and selected chapters will be available in Classes under this course title.

**Part I: Biocultural Theories**

**Week 1:** What are biocultures? Mutual construction of the cultural and the biological

*Wednesday, September 5*

Davis and Morris “Biocultures Manifesto”

David Morris “What is Postmodern Illness?”

**Week 2:** Cultural construction of the body

*Monday, September 10*

Ian Hacking “Making up People”

Anne Marie Mol The Body Multiple Chapters 1 and 2

*Wednesday, September 12*

Janice Boddy “Womb as Oasis: The Symbolic Context of Pharoanic Circumcision in Rural Northern Sudan”

Margaret Lock “Menopause, Local Biologies, and Cultures of Aging”

**Week 3:** Cultural construction of illness, time and space

*Monday, September 17*

Arthur Kleinman Illness Narratives *excerpt*

Mark Nichter “Idioms of Distress: Alternatives in the Expression of Psychosocial Distress: A Case Study from South India”

Atwood Gaines “From DSM I to III T-R: A Cultural Constructivist Reading of US Psychiatric Classification”

*Wednesday, September 19*

Marcel Mauss “Techniques of the Body”

EP Thompson “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism”

Walther, M. “A Comparative Study Based on Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice.”

*Recommended: Pierre Bourdieu Logic of Practice Excerpt*

**Week 4:** Political Economy of Health

*Monday, September 24*

***Guest Speaker: Eric Manheimer***

Eric Manheimer 12 Patients: Life and Death at Bellevue Hospital Chapters 1-4, 12

*Wednesday, September 26*

Films *(****in class****):* Out in the Rural

Unnatural Causes: In Sickness and in Wealth

Sir Michael Marmot “Inequalities in Health”

**Week 5:** Globalization of Biomedicine

*Monday, October 1*

Paul Farmer Pathologies of Power Preface, Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 9

*Recommended: Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology Introduction*

*Wednesday, October 3*

Ulrich Beck What is Globalization? Introduction

Adriana Petryna “Clinical Trials Offshored: On Private Sector Science and Public Health.”

**Week 6:** Biomedicine as Culture

*Tuesday, October 9 (Monday is holiday, class meets Tues)*

Ethan Waters Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche Intro, Chapters 1, 2, Conclusion

*Wednesday, October 10*

Peter Conrad “Shifting Engines of Medicalization”

Adele Clarke “Biomedicalization: Technoscientific Transformations of Health, Illness, and U.S. Biomedicine”

**Week 7:** Biopolitics

*Monday, October 15*

Michel Foucault Security, Territory, Population and History of Sexuality I *excerpts*

Rabinow, Paul “Artificiality and Enlightenment: From Sociobiology to Biosociality”

*Wednesday, October 17*

Didier Fassin “The Embodied Past: From Paranoid Style to Politics of Memory in South Africa”

Joao Biehl “The Activist State: Global Pharmaceuticals, AIDS, and Citizenship in Brazil”

Adriana Petryna “Biological Citizenship: The Science and Politics of Chernobyl-Exposed Populations”

**Week 8:** Gendered Bodies

*Monday, October 22*

Film: Paris is Burning ***in class***

*Wednesday, October 24*

Judith Butler “Gender is Burning”

**Week 9:** Pharmaceutical Selves

*Monday, October 29*

Joe Dumit Drugs for Life Introduction, Chapters 1-3, Conclusion

*Wednesday, October 31*

***One paragraph final project plan due (biocultural question, methods, data sources)***

David Healy “Shaping the Intimate”

**Week 10:** Trauma, Resilience, Enhancement

*Monday, November 5*

**Guest Lecture: Saudi Garcia**

Rachel Yehuda Podcast, 52 mins

"How Trauma and Resilience Cross Generations"

[https://onbeing.org/programs/rachel-yehuda-how-trauma-and-resilience-cross-generations-nov2017/](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__onbeing.org_programs_rachel-2Dyehuda-2Dhow-2Dtrauma-2Dand-2Dresilience-2Dcross-2Dgenerations-2Dnov2017_&d=DwMFaQ&c=j5oPpO0eBH1iio48DtsedbOBGmuw5jHLjgvtN2r4ehE&r=PITS2k5gOMDC7tiUxovpOjHUZ3n_sNnXdA3Mp-QumfI&m=I6ijIhPe5qB7mY-SpQfFmRxnyZaMEIq8o87kMgMfRkY&s=-dyw4QwL824qTduFbK3B9BkyF4BAsVJZJU2N6vYppWQ&e=" \t "_blank)

Resmaa MenakemMy Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and BodiesIntroduction and Chapter 1: Your Body and Blood

*Suggested: Author Interview: [https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-author-speaks/201709/my-grandmother-s-hands](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__www.psychologytoday.com_us_blog_the-2Dauthor-2Dspeaks_201709_my-2Dgrandmother-2Ds-2Dhands&d=DwMFaQ&c=j5oPpO0eBH1iio48DtsedbOBGmuw5jHLjgvtN2r4ehE&r=PITS2k5gOMDC7tiUxovpOjHUZ3n_sNnXdA3Mp-QumfI&m=I6ijIhPe5qB7mY-SpQfFmRxnyZaMEIq8o87kMgMfRkY&s=SDjvJT7Q57lp_rKjK4NeZow2c0WwayepPPZOmsY1Iak&e=" \t "_blank)*

*Wednesday, November 7*

Film: Fixed: The Science/Fiction of Human Enhancement (***in class***, segments)

Linda Hogle “Enhancement Technologies and the Body”

**Week 11:** The Normal and the Multispecies

*Monday, November 12*

Georges Canguilhem The Normal and the Pathological *excerpts*

Lennard Davis “The Rule of Normalcy”

*Wednesday, November 14*

Eben Kirksey and Stefan Helmreich “The Emergence of Multispecies Ethnography”

Stefan Helmreich Alien Ocean *excerpts*

Donna Haraway When Species Meet *excerpts*

*Recommended: Multispecies Salon Companion (all entries under “Multispecies ABC – tabs in lower right hand corner) http://www.multispecies-salon.org/*

**Week 12:** War and Terror

*Monday, November 19*

Film: The Shock Doctrine ***(in class,*** segments***)***

Michael Taussig The Nervous System Chapters 1, 2

Ken MacLeish “Armor and Anesthesia: Exposure, Feeling, and the Soldier’s Body”

*Wednesday, November 21 Thanksgiving Break*

**Week 13:** Recovery

*Monday, November 26*

Film: Managing the Fix: How Do You Treat Addiction in the Age of Pills? (***in class***, rough cut segments)

Angela Garcia “The Elegaic Addict”

Merrill Singer Drugging the Poor Chapters 1, 2

*Wednesday, November 28*

***Guest Speakers: Bellevue Hospital Video Stories in Recovery Group***

Elizabeth Austin, Aditi Ramakrishnan, Kim Hopper “Embodying Recovery: A Qualitative Study of Peer Work in a Consumer-Run Service Setting”

Dennis Watson “The Evolving Understanding of Recovery: What does the Sociology of Mental Health Have to Offer?”

**Week 14:** Revisiting Race

*Monday, December 3*

Steven Epstein “Bodily Differences and Collective Identities: Politics of Race and Gender in Biomedical Research in the United States”

Lance Gravlee “How Race Becomes Biology: Embodiment of Social Inequality”

*Wednesday, December 5*

Nancy Krieger “Theories for the 21st Century: An Ecosocial Perspective;” and

“Methods for the Scientific Study of Discrimination and Health: An Ecosocial Approach”

Alondra Nelson “Reconciliation Projects: From Kinship to Justice”

**Week 15:**

*Monday, December 10*

Student presentations of websites

*Wednesday, December 12*

Student presentations of websites

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES  
  
Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at [212-998-4980](tel:212-998-4980" \t "_blank).   
  
NYU's Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities  
726 Broadway, 2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10003-6675  
Telephone: [212-998-4980](tel:212-998-4980" \t "_blank)  
Voice/TTY Fax: [212-995-4114](tel:212-995-4114" \t "_blank)   
Web site: [www.nyu.edu/csd](https://mail.nyumc.org/owa/redir.aspx?C=01GrsvFj0kSEopH69IY4DKMZGo3L2NMIAXUqEYkP6Fc_tnRgUM0zMEU08wQw79q8lBSgTiwEadQ.&URL=https%3a%2f%2furldefense.proofpoint.com%2fv2%2furl%3fu%3dhttp-3A__www.nyu.edu_csd%26d%3dDQMFaQ%26c%3dj5oPpO0eBH1iio48DtsedbOBGmuw5jHLjgvtN2r4ehE%26r%3dPITS2k5gOMDC7tiUxovpOjHUZ3n_sNnXdA3Mp-QumfI%26m%3d0AGLg9dqmT0q5LINmT9Sd4HFbyxFBMTEDjH921D4hIA%26s%3dTDZprOCFKo4KiQdnhK4GLvKDjJNO4Gp6nPc0qJJc8Mg%26e%3d" \t "_blank)