

## **ANTH 325: Bodies in Medicine**

**Fall 2023**

Instructor: Megan A. Carney, Associate Professor of Anthropology  
& Director of the Center for Regional Food Studies

Email: [mcarney@arizona.edu](mailto:mcarney@arizona.edu)

**MW lecture 11-11:50am** (Architecture, Rm 103)

**Friday sections 10-11am** (Harvill, Rm 415)

Professor Carney's Office Hours: Thursday 10am-12pm (Haury 318 or virtual by appointment)

TA: Jamie Schafrath [jschafrath@arizona.edu](mailto:jschafrath@arizona.edu)

TA Office Hours and Location: Monday 12:30-2:30pm (Haury 120 or virtual by appointment)



### **I. Course Description**

Medical Anthropology is concerned with the comparative study of culture, health, illness, and healing practices. This course offers an introduction to medical anthropology through the lens of bodies and medicine. We will explore the historical, structural, and social conditions that have rendered different types of bodies – i.e., the pathologization of bodies – and uneven life chances among them. We will study how people's perceptions and interpretations of health, illness, and bodies are inextricably tied to cultural practices and norms, social structures, and historical and environmental conditions. Course materials include academic articles, excerpts from book-length ethnographies, podcasts, and films.

## **II. Course Objectives**

This course introduces students to the unique ways that anthropology engages the practices and beliefs at the heart of medicine. The term project challenges students to apply analyses and arguments from course texts to the creation of original research.

## **III. Expected Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this class, students will:

- **Discover global cultural diversity:** Students will discover the variability of lifestyles and worldviews across cultures. Students will explore a wide array of different cultures that illustrate how people work to create a sense of distinctiveness (a sense of self and other) through culturally meaningful practices.
- **Discuss social inequality:** Students will discuss how cultural differences are linked to inequality and the distribution of power and how people engage in practices that are influenced by both local and global dynamics.
- **Illustrate the importance of culture and how culture influences our lives:** Students will illustrate the centrality of culture to the human experience and the implications of this centrality for how we model human behavior and understand human nature. Students will also explore the methods through which anthropologists study culture, as well as how anthropology informs ethics, public policy, and other applied fields. You can learn more about School of Anthropology program assessments here: <http://assessment.arizona.edu/sbs/Anthropology%20Undergrad>

## **IV. Course Format and Teaching Methods**

This course meets for in-person lectures twice per week and sections once per week. It is important that you read texts and/or listen to podcasts listed on your syllabus in advance of those meetings. My lectures will complement and engage with readings, podcasts, and films that we view together in class, but I will not necessarily lecture on those materials. Discussion sections will be led by the Graduate Teaching Assistant (TA). Discussion sections give you an opportunity to revisit lecture content, and discuss themes and issues raised in course materials. **Your attendance is required at weekly discussion sections.**

## **V. Overview of Course Requirements**

- **Complete all readings by the class session for which they are assigned.** You should come prepared with questions about parts you may not have fully understood as well as

comments, challenges to the author's argument, or arguments of your own. Bring the syllabus, assigned reading materials, and notes to each lecture and section meeting.

- **Attend and participate in all class meetings.** You are expected to come to class having completed the relevant readings and assignments and to participate in the ensuing discussion by sharing your thoughts, views, and questions.
- **Classroom behavior:** Students must treat each other and the instructor in a respectful and considerate manner. Please make every effort to arrive on time.
- **Communication:** TAs and lecturer do not respond to emails that inquire about information provided in the syllabus, the course website, or announced in class. **Check email regularly for course-related announcements.** Use "ANTH 325" in the subject line of emails to the instructor and TA.

## **VI. Evaluation**

Evaluation for the course will be based on attendance and participation in section, quizzes, a take-home midterm, and a research paper.

- **Attendance and participation** **20%**  
Student attendance at section is mandatory and group activities count toward participation.
- **Quizzes** **30%**  
Conducted at the beginning of section most weeks, content based on that week's lectures and readings. These are **very short** quizzes on basic content from readings, lectures, and other course materials. The structure of quizzes is multiple-choice, true/false, and short answer questions. There will be 10 quizzes total, each worth 3% of the total grade.
- **Take-home midterm exam** **25%**  
Exam will include short essay questions based on the first half of the course, including content from films, readings, podcasts, and lectures. (1250-1500 words)
- **Final research paper** **25%**  
Students will select the topic of their research paper and further assignment instructions will be provided midway through the semester. This essay will be revised after peer review and resubmitted for credit. Participation in peer review and evidence of revision are part of the assignment grade. (1250-1500 words)

## **VII. Extensions, Lateness and Penalties**

**Assignments will not be accepted late**, without appropriate documentation of serious illness or family emergency. In both cases, the appropriate extension will be negotiated. In all other cases, one-third of a grade will be deducted from the assignment for each day that it is late.

### **Grading Scale**

A: 90-100  
B: 80-89  
C: 70-79  
D: 60-69  
F: 59 and below

## **VIII. Required Texts and Other Course Materials**

All required readings will be accessible through the course D2L website.

## **IX. Films Screened in Class**

All films screened in class are considered part of the required course materials. If you miss a screening, it is expected that you view the film outside of class. Most films will be available online.

## **X. Course Schedule**

### **Part 1: Theoretical Foundations**

#### **Week 1: Introducing Medical Anthropology**

*Goals for this week and next: We will learn how medical anthropology fits within the broader discipline of anthropology, the core questions posed by the field of medical anthropology, and how medical anthropology contributes to helping us understand the ways that structural inequalities produce different kinds of bodies as well as differential access to care and healing.*

8/21 – Introduction to the Course

*Readings:*

- Course syllabus

8/23 – What is Medical Anthropology?

*Readings:*

- Collettiva Kaethe. 2021. "Live Matter" (Materia Viva).  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/16pvyi7HeP7EeMzXbW0eCO2mBPTqOu700/view>

Podcast:

- "What Medical Anthropology is..." (What is Medical Anthropology?)

8/25 – Section

## **Week 2: Intersectional Perspectives on the Body**

*Goals for this week: We will learn about key concepts in anthropology such as culture, ethnocentrism, and cultural relativism, as well as theory on intersectionality. We will engage with how cultural beliefs and practices alter the meanings of the body, health, illness, disease as well as with intersectional perspectives. Finally, we will examine some of the methods that medical anthropologists employ in studying the complexities of bodies in medicine.*

8/28 – Anthropology of the Body; Embodiment

Readings:

- Gálvez et al. 2020 "Reimagining Noncommunicable Chronic Disease." *American Anthropologist* 122(3): 639-665.

8/30 – Intersectional Perspectives and Research Methods in Anthropology

Podcast:

- "Kimberle Crenshaw: Intersectionality" (Making Contact)

9/1 – Section

## **Week 3: Contesting the Hegemony of Biomedicine**

*Goals for this week: We will discuss how approaches to interpreting health and illness vary across diverse social and cultural settings and we will challenge sites of care that have been deemed politically and culturally "neutral."*

9/4 – NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

9/6 – Cultural Perspectives on Health and the Culture of Biomedicine

Readings:

- Taylor, J. 2003. "Confronting 'culture' in medicine's 'culture of no culture.'" *Academic Medicine* 78: 555-559.

Podcast:

- "A Shot in the Dark" (Code Switch)

9/8 – Section

## **Part 2: Differentiation of Bodies and Life Chances**

*Goals for this section of the course: For the next 9 weeks of class, we will examine the ways that bodies are historically and socially constructed and the role of biomedicine and other institutions in rendering care and/or harm.*

### **Week 4: Colonized, Displaced, and/or Undocumented Bodies**

9/11 – Pathologies of Settler Colonialism

*Readings:*

- Smith-Morris, C. et al. 2021. “Decolonizing Care at Diagnosis: Culture, History and Family at an Urban Inter-tribal Clinic.” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 35(3).
- Muller, M. 2022. “Colonial Geographies: Indigenous Access to Primary Care in British Columbia.” *Medical Anthropology*.

9/13 – Displacement, Neoliberalism, and Border Imperialism

*Readings:*

- Farfán-Santos, E. 2019. “Undocumented Motherhood: Gender, Maternal Identity, and the Politics of Health Care.” *Medical Anthropology*.
- Carney, M.A. 2015. *The Unending Hunger: Tracing Women and Food Insecurity Across Borders*. Oakland: UC Press. (**selected excerpts**)

*Podcast:*

- “How Climate-Linked Food Insecurity Shapes Migration” (MPI’s Changing Climates, Changing Migration)

9/15 – Section

### **Week 5: Racialized and/or Incarcerated Bodies**

9/18 – Racialization and Anti-Blackness

*Readings:*

- Reese, A. and Johnson, S.A. 2022. “‘We All We Got’: Urban Black Ecologies of Care and Mutual Aid.” *Environment and Society* 13(1): 27-42.

*Podcast:*

- “600 Years a Slave” (Zora’s Daughters)

9/20 – Spatial Violence and the Carceral State

*Film:* “13th” (2016)

*Readings:*

- Sufrin, C. 2018. “Making mothers in jail: carceral reproduction of normative motherhood.” *Reproductive Biomedicine & Society Online* 7: 55-64.  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2405661818300406>

9/21 – Section

## Week 6: Reproductive Bodies

9/25 – Obstetric Racism – **NO CLASS MEETING** (but watch the film listed below, accessible through UA Libraries website)

*Film:* “The Business of Birth Control” (2022)

*Readings:*

- Davis, D.A. 2021. “A Birth Story.” Anthropology News  
<https://www.anthropology-news.org/articles/a-birth-story/>

*Podcast:*

- “Unpacking Medical and Obstetric Racism with Dr. Dana-Ain Davis”  
(Homecoming Podcast)

9/27 – Pregnancy and Clinical Trials (**guest speaker Prof. Natali Valdez**)

*Readings:*

- Valdez, N. 2021. *Weighing the Future: Race, Science and Pregnancy Trials in the Postgenomic Era*. Oakland: UC Press. (**selected excerpts**)
- Luna, Zakiya, and Kristin Luker. 2013. “Reproductive justice.” *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 9: 327-352.

9/29 – Section

## Week 7: Queer and/or Gendered Bodies

10/2 – LGBTQ populations in healthcare settings

*Readings:*

- Baker, K. and Beagan, B. 2014. “Making Assumptions, Making Space: An Anthropological Critique of Cultural Competency and Its Relevance to Queer Patients.” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 28(4): 578-598.

10/4 – Gender-based violence (**guest speaker PhD Student Jamie Schafroth**)

*Readings:*

- Mulla, S. 2014. *The Violence of Care: Rape Victims, Forensic Nurses, and Sexual Assault*. New York and London: New York University Press. (**selected excerpts**)

10/6 – Section: assign and discuss instructions for take-home midterm exam

## Week 8: Mid-Semester Review & Midterm Exam

10/9 – READING DAY/WORK ON TAKE-HOME EXAM

10/11 – READING DAY/WORK ON TAKE-HOME EXAM

**\*\*No section this week – work on your midterm exam\*\***

**\*\*TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM DUE SUNDAY, OCT. 15TH BY 11:59PM\*\***

## Week 9: Malnourished Bodies

10/16 – The Politics of Obesity and Fat Stigma (**guest speaker Prof. Jessica Hardin**)

*Readings:*

- SturtSreetharan, C. et al. 2021. *Fat in Four Cultures*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. (**selected excerpts**).

10/18 – Disordered Eating

*Readings:*

- Lester, R. 2019. *Famished: Eating Disorders and Failed Care in America*. Oakland: UC Press. (**selected excerpts**)

*Podcast:*

- “Rebecca J. Lester: *Famished: Eating Disorders and Failed Care in America*” (New Books in Anthropology)

10/20 – Section: Discuss instructions for research paper and begin brainstorming topics.

## Week 10: Exposed Bodies

10/23 – Toxicity

*Readings:*

- Graeter, S. 2020. “Infrastructural Incorporations: Toxic Storage, Corporate Indemnity, and Ethical Deferral in Peru’s Neo-extractive Era.” *American Anthropologist* 122(1): 21-26.

10/25 – Microbial Exposure (**guest speaker Prof. Suzanne Ishaq**)

*Readings:*

- Robinson et al. 2022. “Twenty Important Research Questions in Microbial Exposure and Social Equity.” *mSystems*  
<https://journals.asm.org/doi/full/10.1128/msystems.01240-21>

10/27 – Section: Submit research paper topic to TA

## Week 11: Disabled and/or Aging Bodies

10/30 – Disability (guest speaker from Disability Cultural Center)

Readings:

- Disability Justice <https://www.sinsinvalid.org/blog/disability-justice-a-working-draft-by-patty-berne>

Podcast:

- “What to know and how to talk about disability” (Life Kit)

11/1 – Anthropologies of Aging

Video: “Coping with a Super-Ageing Nation” (2020)

Readings:

- Aronsson, A. 2022. “Professional Women and Elder Care in Contemporary Japan: Anxiety and the Move Toward Technocare.” *Anthropology & Aging* 43(1).

11/3 – Section

## Week 12: Addicted Bodies

11/6 – Addiction and its Structural Dimensions

Readings:

- Garcia, A. 2010. *The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession along the Rio Grande*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (**selected excerpts**)
- Mendoza, S. et al. 2018. “Re-racialization of Addiction and the Redistribution of Blame in the White Opioid Epidemic.” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 33(2).

11/8 – READING/WRITING DAY – work on drafts of research papers

**\*\*No sections on Friday this week - Veterans Day\*\***

## **Part 3: Accountability and Applied Critical Medical Anthropology**

*Goals for this section of the course: We consider the potential of using ethnography and medical anthropology as tools for social change in a globalizing world to disrupt cycles of dehumanization and health disparities.*

## Week 13

11/13 – Humanitarianism (guest speaker Dr. Doris Burtcher from Medecins Sans Frontieres – Austria)

Readings:

- TBA

11/15 – Public Anthropology: Responding to Climate Change, Pandemics, and Other “Crises”

*Readings: selected op-eds (TBA)*

*Podcast: (TBA)*

11/17 – Section: in-class peer-review of research papers

## Week 14

11/20 – Mobilizing a Radical Politics of Care

*Readings:*

- Hobart, H. and Kneese, T. 2020. “Radical Care: Survival Strategies for Uncertain Times.” *Social Text* 38(1): 1-16.

11/22 – NO CLASS – integrate revisions into research papers & finalize presentations

11/24 – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING

## Week 15

11/27 – FINAL PRESENTATIONS

11/29 – FINAL PRESENTATIONS

*\*\*No section this week - make final revisions to your research papers\*\**

## Week 16

12/4 – FINAL PRESENTATIONS

12/6 – FINAL PRESENTATIONS

*\*\*No section this week\*\**

**\*\*FINAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE FRIDAY, DEC. 8TH BY 11:59PM\*\***

## **XI. Class Policies and Other Helpful Information**

**There is a strict no make-up policy for all assignments in this course.** If you know in advance that you will be missing a quiz or assignment for university-excused absence (i.e., student-athlete on travel, UA Dean of Students pre-approved absence, holidays or special events observed by organized religions), you must contact the instructor in advance to arrange accommodations. In the event of an emergency (e.g., serious illness, family emergency), you must (1) contact the instructor via email at least 2 hours prior to the time of the scheduled deadline, (2) provide written proof of the emergency, and (3) obtain the instructor's approval for an excused absence. If you do not complete all three things, you will be given a zero for that quiz or assignment. If a make-up quiz is approved, an alternate form will be given during the time and date agreed upon by the student and the instructor.

- If you feel sick, or may have been in contact with someone who is infectious, stay home. Except for seeking medical care, avoid contact with others and do not travel.
- Notify your instructor(s) if you will be missing a course meeting or an assignment deadline.
- Non-attendance for any reason does **not** guarantee an automatic extension of due date or rescheduling of examinations/assessments.
- Please communicate and coordinate any request directly with your instructor.
- If you must miss the equivalent of more than one week of class, you should contact the Dean of Students Office [DOS-deanofstudents@email.arizona.edu](mailto:DOS-deanofstudents@email.arizona.edu) to share documentation about the challenges you are facing.
- Voluntary, free, and convenient [COVID-19 testing](#) is available for students on Main Campus.
- If you test positive for COVID-19 and you are participating in on-campus activities, you must report your results to Campus Health. To learn more about the process for reporting a positive test, visit the [Case Notification Protocol](#).
- COVID-19 vaccine is available for all students at [Campus Health](#).
- Visit the [UARizona COVID-19](#) page for regular updates.

The UA's policy concerning Class Attendance, Participation, and Administrative Drops is available at: <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/class-attendance-participation-and-administrative-drop>

The UA policy regarding absences for any sincerely held religious belief, observance or practice will be accommodated where reasonable, <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/religious-accommodation-policy>.

Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean Designee) will be honored. See: <https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/absences>

### **Classroom Behavior Policy**

To foster a positive learning environment, students and instructors have a shared responsibility. We want a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment where all of us feel comfortable with each other and where we can challenge ourselves to succeed. Please participate actively in our discussion forums and respect each other's comments.

### **Threatening Behavior Policy**

The UA Threatening Behavior by Students Policy prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to oneself. See <http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students>.

### **Accessibility and Accommodations**

Our goal in this classroom is that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact the Disability Resource Center (520-621-3268) to establish reasonable accommodations. For additional information on the Disability Resource Center and reasonable accommodations, please visit <http://drc.arizona.edu>.

### **Code of Academic Integrity**

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See <https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies/code-academic-integrity>

The University Libraries have some excellent tips for avoiding plagiarism, available at <http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html>.

This course has a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism. If an assignment is plagiarizing in full or in part, intentionally or unintentionally, you will receive a zero for the assignment.

*Selling class notes and/or other course materials to other students or to a third party for resale is not permitted without the instructor's express written consent.* Violations to this and other course rules are subject to the Code of Academic Integrity and may result in course sanctions. Additionally, students who use D2L or UA email to sell or buy these copyrighted materials are subject to Code of Conduct Violations for misuse of student e-mail addresses. This conduct may also constitute copyright infringement.

### **UA Nondiscrimination and Anti-harassment Policy**

The University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination; see <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy>

Our classroom is a place where everyone is encouraged to express well-formed opinions and their reasons for those opinions. We also want to create a tolerant and open environment where such opinions can be expressed without resorting to bullying or discrimination of others.

**Academic advising**

If you have questions about your academic progress this semester, please reach out to your academic advisor (<https://advising.arizona.edu/advisors/major>). Contact the Advising Resource Center (<https://advising.arizona.edu/>) for all general advising questions and referral assistance. Call 520-626-8667 or email to [advising@arizona.edu](mailto:advising@arizona.edu)

**Life challenges**

If you are experiencing unexpected barriers to your success in your courses, please note the Dean of Students Office is a central support resource for all students and may be helpful. The Dean of Students Office can be reached at (520) 621-2057 or [DOS-deanofstudents@email.arizona.edu](mailto:DOS-deanofstudents@email.arizona.edu)

**Physical and mental-health challenges**

If you are facing physical or mental health challenges this semester, please note that Campus Health provides quality medical and mental health care. For medical appointments, call (520) 621-9202. For After Hours care, call (520) 570-7898. For the Counseling & Psych Services (CAPS) 24/7 hotline, call (520) 621-3334.

**Statement on compliance with COVID-19 mitigation guidelines**

As we enter the semester, the health and wellbeing of everyone in this class is the highest priority. Accordingly, we are all required to follow the university guidelines on COVID-19 mitigation. Please visit [www.covid19.arizona.edu](http://www.covid19.arizona.edu) for the latest guidance.

**Subject to change statement**

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.