

ANTH 444: Medical Anthropology

Fall 2024

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

Email: mcarney@arizona.edu

TR class 11am-12:15pm (Communication, Rm 311)

Professor Carney's Office Hours: Thursday 12:30-2:30pm (Haury 318, or virtual by appointment)

I. Course Description

Medical Anthropology is concerned with the comparative study of culture, health, illness, and healing practices. We will study how people's perceptions and interpretations of health and illness are inextricably tied to cultural practices and norms, social structures, and historical and environmental conditions. We will explore ideas and behaviors related to health across a variety of social settings, as well as the ways that different groups of people navigate uneven access to health care because of social and economic disparities. Course materials include academic articles, book-length ethnographies, and films.

Thus, this course involves your critical thinking, engagement, and reflection around the following questions:

1. What determines health and illness?
2. How and why do societies vary in their healthcare systems, illness beliefs, and illness experiences?
3. What role does culture play in treatment outcomes?

II. 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.
- **Explore the relationship between culture and biology:** Students will explore how culture and biology interact with one another in shaping the human experience, as well

as the valuable perspectives and methodologies involved in such inquiry. Anthropology is unique in its longstanding insistence on sophisticated approaches to both biology and culture

- You can learn more about School of Anthropology program assessments here: <http://assessment.arizona.edu/sbs/Anthropology%20Undergrad>

III. Course Format and Teaching Methods

This course meets in-person, twice per week. It is important that you read texts listed on your syllabus in advance of class meetings.

IV. 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 class 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:** As a general policy, I do not respond to emails that inquire about information provided on the syllabus, the course website, or announced in class. **Check email regularly for course-related announcements.** When emailing me, please use "ANTH 444" in the subject line.

V. Evaluation

Evaluation for the course will be based on attendance and participation in class (including a facilitated discussion and current event presentation), three short response papers, a take-home midterm essay, and a book review and presentation.

- **Attendance and participation** **40%**
Class attendance is mandatory and in-class activities count toward participation. Your current event presentation counts towards this portion of your grade. On the first day of class, students will sign up for one class meeting during which they will co-facilitate discussion with a peer and another date on which they will present on a current event related to the course. In addition to summarizing the current event for the class, students should respond to the following questions: *What does the current event tell us about cultural notions of health and illness? In what other ways is the current event*

relevant to medical anthropology? The **facilitated discussion and current event presentation are worth 10% each** respectively of the total grade.

- **Response papers** **15%**
Students are required to turn in three critical response papers during the course of the semester. These will be due **September 12th, October 3rd, and November 7th**. Your papers should be 1-2 double-spaced pages. The objective of these papers is for you to critique course readings and to develop an argument that you will substantiate with evidence. Although some summarizing of readings may be necessary as you frame your paper, assume a familiar audience and devote the bulk of the assignment to presenting your own critical thinking and analysis. **ALL PAPERS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED USING D2L (IN EFFORT TO REDUCE PAPER USE), AND BY 11:59PM ON THE DAY THE PAPER IS DUE.** This gives you time to collect your thoughts from that day's class discussion to modify your paper, if applicable.
- **Midterm essay** **20%**
The take-home essay assignment will include short essay questions based on the first half of the course, including content from films, readings, and lectures. (1250-1500 words)
- **Book review & presentation** **25%**
Students will select a contemporary book in medical anthropology to read and review. Further instructions for this assignment will be provided. The review will be revised after peer review and resubmitted for credit. Participation in peer review, evidence of revision, and a short in-class presentation are part of the assignment grade. (1250-1500 words)

VI. 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

VII. Required Texts and Other Course Materials

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

VIII. 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.

IX. Course Schedule

Week 1

8/27 – Readings:

- Course syllabus

8/29 – Readings:

- *Reproductive Injustice: Racism, Pregnancy, and Premature Birth* (Davis)
 - “Introduction”
- *Arc of Interference: Medical Anthropology for Worlds on Edge* (Biehl and Adams)
 - “Introduction”

Week 2

9/3 – Readings:

- *Reproductive Injustice: Racism, Pregnancy, and Premature Birth* (Davis)
 - “Chapter 1: Premature Predicaments”
- *Arc of Interference: Medical Anthropology for Worlds on Edge* (Biehl and Adams)
 - “Chapter 1: Death by Fire: The Problem of Moral Uncertainty in China’s Tibet” (Adams)

9/5 – Readings:

- *Reproductive Injustice: Racism, Pregnancy, and Premature Birth* (Davis)
 - “Chapter 2: Into the NICU” and “Chapter 3: Pregnancy and Prematurity in the Afterlife of Slavery”

Week 3

9/10 – Readings:

- *Reproductive Injustice: Racism, Pregnancy, and Premature Birth* (Davis)
 - “Witnessing A Birth: An Interlude” and “Chapter 4: Saving the Babies”
- *Arc of Interference: Medical Anthropology for Worlds on Edge* (Biehl and Adams)
 - “Chapter 3: In the Vast Abrupt: Horizon Work in an Age of Runaway Climate Change” (Petryna)

9/12 – **RESPONSE PAPER #1 DUE ON D2L BY 11:59PM**

Readings:

- *Worlds of Care: The Emotional Lives of Fathers Caring for Children with Disabilities* (Jackson)
 - “Chapter 1: The Practice of Care” and “Chapter 2: The Depths of Time”

Week 4

9/17 – Readings:

- *Worlds of Care: The Emotional Lives of Fathers Caring for Children with Disabilities* (Jackson)
 - “Interlude: Gary’s Arrival Story” and “Chapter 3: Between Bodies”
- *Arc of Interference: Medical Anthropology for Worlds on Edge* (Biehl and Adams)
 - “Chapter 4: Justifying a Lower Standard of Health Care for the World’s Poor: A Call for Decolonizing Global Health” (Keshavjee)

9/19 – Readings:

- *Worlds of Care: The Emotional Lives of Fathers Caring for Children with Disabilities* (Jackson)
 - “Chapter 4: Conditions of Possibility” and “Interlude: Connectivities”

Week 5

9/24 – Readings:

- *Worlds of Care: The Emotional Lives of Fathers Caring for Children with Disabilities* (Jackson)
 - “Chapter 5: Belonging and Being-for-Others”
- *Arc of Interference: Medical Anthropology for Worlds on Edge* (Biehl and Adams)
 - “Chapter 5: The Moral Economies of Heart Disease and Cardiac Care in India” (Jones)

9/26 – Readings:

- *Pressing Onward: The Imperative Resilience of Latina Migrant Mothers* (Cerdeña)
 - “Introduction,” “Chapter 1: Leaving”

Week 6

10/1 – Readings:

- *Pressing Onward: The Imperative Resilience of Latina Migrant Mothers* (Cerdeña)
 - “Chapter 2: Moving” and “Chapter 3: Arriving”
- *Arc of Interference: Medical Anthropology for Worlds on Edge* (Biehl and Adams)
 - “Chapter 7: A Good Death: The Promise and Threat of Biometric Inclusion for Transgender Women in India” (Cohen)

10/3 – **RESPONSE PAPER #2 DUE ON D2L BY 11:59PM**

Readings:

- *Pressing Onward: The Imperative Resilience of Latina Migrant Mothers* (Cerdeña)
 - “Chapter 4: Mothering” and “Chapter 5: Surviving”
 - Optional: “Conclusion”

Week 7

10/8 – work on midterm essay

10/10 – work on midterm essay

****Friday, 10/11 – Submit midterm essay on D2L by 11:59pm****

Week 8

10/15 – Readings:

- *Traveling with Sugar: Chronicles of a Global Epidemic* (Moran Thomas)
 - “Approach”
- *Arc of Interference: Medical Anthropology for Worlds on Edge* (Biehl and Adams)
 - “Chapter 9: Environments and Mutable Selves” (Lock)

10/17 – Readings:

- *Traveling with Sugar: Chronicles of a Global Epidemic* (Moran Thomas)
 - “Past is Prologue” and “What is Communicable?”

Week 9

10/22 – Readings:

- *Traveling with Sugar: Chronicles of a Global Epidemic* (Moran Thomas)
 - “Crónica One” and “Crónica Two”
- *Arc of Interference: Medical Anthropology for Worlds on Edge* (Biehl and Adams)
 - “Chapter 11: Ethnographic Open” (Biehl)

10/24 – Readings:

- *Traveling with Sugar: Chronicles of a Global Epidemic* (Moran Thomas)
 - “Crónica Three” and “Crónica Four”

Week 10

10/29 – Readings:

- *Breaking Points: Youth Mental Health Crises and How We All Can Help* (Myers)

- specific chapters TBD
- *Arc of Interference: Medical Anthropology for Worlds on Edge* (Biehl and Adams)
 - “Afterword: Lessons Learned from the Ethnography of Care” (Kleinman)

10/31 – *Readings:*

- *Breaking Points: Youth Mental Health Crises and How We All Can Help* (Myers)
 - specific chapters TBD

Week 11

11/5 – *Readings:*

- *Breaking Points: Youth Mental Health Crises and How We All Can Help* (Myers)
 - specific chapters TBD
- begin the book you selected

11/7 – **RESPONSE PAPER #3 DUE ON D2L BY 11:59PM**

Readings:

- continue with the book you selected

Week 12

11/12 – How to write a book review (part 1)

Readings:

- continue with the book you selected
- sample book reviews (TBA)

11/14 – How to write a book review (part 2)

Readings:

- complete reading the book you selected to review

Week 13

11/19 – READING/WRITING DAY – complete drafting your book review

11/21 – in-class peer review of book reviews

Week 14

11/26 – **TBD**

11/28 – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING

Week 15

12/3 – FINAL PRESENTATIONS

12/5 – FINAL PRESENTATIONS

Week 16

12/10 – FINAL PRESENTATIONS/CLASS PARTY

****FRIDAY 12/13 – SUBMIT FINAL DRAFT OF BOOK REVIEW ON D2L BY 11:59PM****

XI. Class Policies and Other Helpful Information

Absence & Class Participation

The UA's policies concerning Class Attendance and Participation is available at:

<https://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/courses-credit/courses/class-attendance-participation>.

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>. The calendar of religious holidays can be found at <https://registrar.arizona.edu/calendar-religious-holidays>.

Absences for groups of more than three students that are pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean Designee) will be honored. See:

<http://policy.arizona.edu/employmenthuman-resources/attendance>.

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 & Accommodations

At the University of Arizona, we strive to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please contact the Disability Resource Center (520-621-3268, <https://drc.arizona.edu/>) to establish reasonable accommodations.

See <http://drc.arizona.edu/instructors/syllabus-statement>.

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>.

Nondiscrimination & Anti-Harassment

The University of Arizona is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination. In support of this commitment, the University prohibits discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, based on a protected classification, including race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or genetic information. For more information, including how to report a concern, please see <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy>.

Safety on Campus & in the Classroom

For a list of emergency procedures for all types of incidents, please visit the website of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT): <https://cirt.arizona.edu/case-emergency/overview>. Also watch the video available at https://arizona.sabacloud.com/Saba/Web_spf/NA7P1PRD161/common/learningeventdetail/crtfy0000000000003560.

Campus Pantry

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. In addition, the University of Arizona Campus Pantry is open for students to receive supplemental groceries at no cost. Please see their website at: campuspantry.arizona.edu for open times.

Additional Resources for Students

UA Academic policies and procedures are available at <https://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/all>.

Campus Health

<http://www.health.arizona.edu/>

Campus Health provides quality medical and mental health care services through virtual and in-person care.

Phone: 520-621-9202

Counseling and Psych Services (CAPS)

<https://health.arizona.edu/counseling-psych-services>

CAPS provides mental health care, including short-term counseling services.

Phone: 520-621-3334

The Dean of Students Office's Student Assistance Program

<https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/support/student-assistance>

Student Assistance helps students manage crises, life traumas, and other barriers that impede success. The staff addresses the needs of students who experience issues related to social

adjustment, academic challenges, psychological health, physical health, victimization, and relationship issues, through a variety of interventions, referrals, and follow up services.

Email: DOS-deanofstudents@arizona.edu

Phone: 520-621-7057

Survivor Advocacy Program

<https://survivoradvocacy.arizona.edu/>

The Survivor Advocacy Program provides confidential support and advocacy services to student survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. The Program can also advise students about relevant non-UA resources available within the local community for support.

Email: survivoradvocacy@arizona.edu

Phone: 520-621-5767

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

Preferred Name & Pronoun

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct instructors on your preferred gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly in class or via email (instructor email). If you wish to change your preferred name or pronoun in the UAccess system, please use the following guidelines:

Preferred name: University of Arizona students may choose to identify themselves within the University community using a preferred first name that differs from their official/legal name. A student's preferred name will appear instead of the person's official/legal first name in select University-related systems and documents, provided that the name is not being used for the purpose of misrepresentation. Students are able to update their preferred names in UAccess.

Pronouns: Students may designate pronouns they use to identify themselves. Instructors and staff are encouraged to use pronouns for people that they use for themselves as a sign of respect and inclusion. Students are able to update and edit their pronouns in UAccess.

More information on updating your preferred name and pronouns is available on the Office of the Registrar site at <https://www.registrar.arizona.edu/records-enrollment/personal-information/updating-personal-information>.

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; see <http://policy.arizona.edu/faculty-affairs-and-academics/course-syllabus-policy-undergraduate-template>.

