

GLOBAL HEALTH AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY (ANSC 148)  
WINTER QUARTER 2018

INSTRUCTOR:

DR. SAIBA VARMA

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OFFICE: SSB 286

OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAYS 3:30-5 PM AND BY APPOINTMENT

I. COURSE OVERVIEW

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“It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society” – Jiddu Krishnamurthi

In contemporary American society, Western medicine—or *biomedicine*, as we will refer to it in this course—is seen as offering quick, effective, and technologically advanced solutions to pain and suffering. *Biomedicine* is a medical system that privileges the physiological and biological causes of disease. As a clinical science, biomedicine is usually seen as culture-less, as universally effective on all bodies. But what happens when Western medicine goes “global,” that is, when it encounters cultural values or beliefs that conceptualize illness, healing, or the body in different ways? Is medicine itself “cultural,” and if so, how? In this course, we will examine how people experience, encounter, confront, and use global health interventions across the globe, and we will appreciate why an anthropological approach to global health is critical to help improve these interventions.

Most readings in this course will be drawn from a subfield of anthropology called *medical anthropology*. By reading anthropological accounts called ethnographies, we will see how conceptions of the body, the causes and meanings of illness, and encounters with health institutions, vary and shift over time and across different contexts. One of the takeaways from this course is that it is possible—indeed, imperative—to understand health, illness, and medicine, not only by looking inside individual bodies, but by situating individual lives within broader social, historical, and political contexts. For students interested in careers in medicine, global health, or public health, medical anthropology offers an interpretive approach to both expert *and* patient perspectives of medicine, the body, and healing. Throughout the quarter, we will develop an understanding of medicine, culture, and healing as dynamic concepts that interact in unpredictable ways, yet are critical to therapeutic outcomes. We will see how cultural values are, in fact, matters of life and death for people all over the world.

II. REQUIRED READINGS

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Sherine Hamdy and Coleman Nye. 2017. *Lissa: A Story about Medical Promise, Friendship and Revolution*. University of Toronto Press. ISBN: 1487593473.

Harris Solomon. 2016. *Metabolic living: Food, Fat, and the Absorption of Illness in India*. Duke University Press.

### III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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The key to success in this course is to attend all lectures, keep up with the readings and assignments, participate in discussions, and ask questions.

#### 1. In-class quizzes – 100%

The graded assignments for this course will consist of **five (5) quizzes**, which will occur during class time, at any point during the quarter. The quizzes capture whether you are keeping up with the readings and how well you understand and respond to the key concepts of the course. Only **four (4)** out of **five (5)** quizzes will be counted towards your final grade; your lowest score will be dropped. Each quiz will count as **25%** of your final grade. You will **not** be quizzed on the readings assigned on the day of the quiz; in other words, you will only be tested on readings that we have already discussed together.

There will be **no make-up** for missed quizzes **unless** you have an excused absence. Excused absences are given only: (a) with presentation of a valid medical or emergency excuse in writing (written by a medical doctor although no specific identifying information regarding the condition should be included); (b) with an emergency in the family; or (c) if you are involved in activist or organizing activities on campus that force you to miss class. **Excused absences must be discussed in advance with Dr. Varma.** Any other failure to take a quiz will result in no credit.

#### 2. Extra credit

In addition to dropping your lowest quiz score, you will also have several extra credit opportunities throughout the quarter, which I will announce in class. To receive +1 point extra credit, you must email me a **one page** (double spaced) **summary** of the event you attended, including how it relates to our course discussion so far. All summaries must be emailed to me by the last day of the quarter in order to receive extra credit. These extra credit points can be *extremely* helpful in boosting your quiz scores and can make the difference between a B+ and A-.

### IV. POLICIES

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*Preparing for class:* Please bring all readings with you to lecture, either in paper form (preferable), on a tablet, or on your computer. **A smartphone is not an acceptable reading device.** You should take notes on each assigned reading and keep track of keywords and vocabulary words that may be unfamiliar. These notes will help you prepare for lecture, discussion, and the quizzes. Although we are in a large classroom, this course will consist of a combination of lectures and in-class discussions. This means that you may be called on to participate in the form of individual, pair, or group discussion groups. I also encourage you to ask questions, synthesize readings, and offer analyses at any point. Rather than expect that the professor will impart knowledge to you, you will be responsible for generating a significant amount of course content.

*Classroom conduct:* To facilitate a vibrant and respectful environment, and to maximize your own learning potential, only students sitting in the last two rows of the lecture hall may use laptops or computers. Computer use in the lecture hall should be strictly limited to consultation of course

materials and composition of class notes. I encourage you to take handwritten notes in lecture because these have been shown to improve learning and retention.

Please put away your cell phones when class begins. Anyone found texting, browsing the internet, or talking on the phone while class is in session will be asked to leave. You are invited to create an environment of mutual respect and intellectual productivity by listening and speaking with an open mind. You should feel free to approach me if you feel anyone’s participation in the course, including your own, is being impeded.

*Accommodations:* Anyone in need of classroom or exam accommodations for a disability is encouraged to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities and should inform me as soon as possible.

*Communication:* The best way to communicate with your TAs and me is via email. However, before you email any of us, please check the syllabus to make sure that the answer to your question cannot be found there. I will respond to emails within 24 hours. Email is also the best way to set up an appointment with me in case you cannot make office hours. All emails should have a specific subject line that indicates the purpose and context of the email, including a reference to the course title (ANSC 148); a salutation, such as “Dear Professor X”; proper grammar and spelling; and a signature, such as “sincerely” or “thank you.”

V. GRADES

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A 93-100	A- 90-92	B+ 87-89	B 83-86
B- 80-82	C+ 77-79	C 73-76	C- 70-72
D+ 67-69	D 63-66	D- 60-62	F 0-59

VI. COURSE SCHEDULE

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Please complete each day’s readings **in the order** they appear on the syllabus.

PART I: FOUNDATIONS OF MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Week 1: Introduction

DATE	READINGS DUE
Tues. 1/10	<i>Introduction to course and syllabus</i>  Hans Rosling, “The Best Stats You’ve Ever Seen” (TED video)
Thurs. 1/12	Horace Miner, “Body Ritual among the Nacirema”  <b>The “Silent Assumptions” of Biomedicine</b> – Elliott Mishler - <a href="https://books.google.com/books?id=CBk7AAAAIAAJ&amp;pg=PA1&amp;lpg=PA1&amp;dq=mishler+silent+assumptions+of+the+biomedical+model&amp;source=bl&amp;ots=8h7wrtOcf&amp;sig=Jfdde7cQx6T8zSSchrlqRFvXdfU&amp;hl=en&amp;sa=X&amp;ved=0ahUKEwi">https://books.google.com/books?id=CBk7AAAAIAAJ&amp;pg=PA1&amp;lpg=PA1&amp;dq=mishler+silent+assumptions+of+the+biomedical+model&amp;source=bl&amp;ots=8h7wrtOcf&amp;sig=Jfdde7cQx6T8zSSchrlqRFvXdfU&amp;hl=en&amp;sa=X&amp;ved=0ahUKEwi</a>

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Week 2: The Place of Culture in Global Health

DATE	READINGS DUE
Tues. 1/17	E. E. Evans-Pritchard, "The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events" (Chapter 2, RMA)  David Arnold, "Epidemic Smallpox in India." <i>Historically Speaking</i> .
Thurs. 1/19	<i>Lissa</i> , Part I

Week 3: The Medical Gaze

DATE	READINGS DUE
Tues. 1/24	Michel Foucault, <i>The Birth of the Clinic</i> , <b>pages ix-xiv only</b> .  John Long, "Foucault's Clinic"
Thurs. 1/26	<i>Lissa</i> Part II and III

Week 4: Becoming a Medical Expert

Tues. 1/31	Claire Wendland, "Moral Maps and Medical Imaginaries: Clinical Tourism at Malawi's College of Medicine"  Courtney Martin, "Western do-gooders need to resist the allure of 'exotic problems' - <a href="http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/apr/23/western-do-gooders-need-to-resist-the-allure-of-exotic-problems?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Tweet">http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/apr/23/western-do-gooders-need-to-resist-the-allure-of-exotic-problems?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Tweet</a>
Thurs. 2/2	Allen Smith and Sherryl Kleinman, "Managing Emotions in Medical School"

Week 5: Violence, Trauma, and Health

Tues. 2/7	The Calais 'Jungle' Clinic <a href="http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/thecure/2016/03/calais-jungle-clinic-160304081309150.html">http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/thecure/2016/03/calais-jungle-clinic-160304081309150.html</a>  Emma Varley and Saiba Varma, "Spectral Ties: Hospital Hauntings across the Line of Control." <i>Medical Anthropology</i> 36(8): 1-15.
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Thurs. 2/9	Sarah S. Willen, "Darfur through a Shoah Lens: Sudanese Asylum Seekers, Unruly Biopolitical Dramas, and the Politics of Humanitarian Compassion in Israel."
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PART II: GLOBAL HEALTH HISTORIES AND PRACTICES

Week 6: Race and Colonialism

DATE	READINGS DUE
Tues. 2/14	Frantz Fanon, "Medicine and Colonialism"
Thurs. 2/16	Jean Comaroff, "The Diseased Health of Africa: Medicine, Colonialism, and the Black Body" in <i>Knowledge, Power and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life</i> , Pp. 305-329.  Laura Seay and Kim Yi Dioone, "The long and ugly tradition of treating Africa as a dirty, diseased place"

Week 7: Structural Violence and Diseases of Poverty

DATE	READINGS DUE
Tues. 2/21	Paul Farmer, "An anthropology of structural violence"
Thurs. 2/23	Lawrence Cohen, "Where it hurts: Indian material for an Ethics of Organ Transplantation." <i>Daedalus</i> 128(4): 135-165.

Week 8: Metabolic Living

DATE	READINGS DUE
Tues. 2/28	Harris Solomon, <i>Metabolic Living</i> , Chapter 1 + interlude
Thurs. 3/2	Harris Solomon, <i>Metabolic Living</i> , Chapter 2 + Interlude

Week 9: Metabolic Living

DATE	READINGS DUE
Tues. 3/7	Harris Solomon, <i>Metabolic Living</i> , Chapter 3 + interlude
Thurs. 3/9	Harris Solomon, <i>Metabolic Living</i> , Chapter 4 + interlude

Week 10: Global Health Futures/Alternatives

Tues. 3/14	Harris Solomon, <i>Metabolic Living</i> , Chapter 5 and Conclusion
Thurs. 3/16	Stacey Leigh Pigg, "On Sitting and Doing"

Watch: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amCyFbTIYCg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amCyFbTIYCg</a>
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