

MEDICINE AND HEALING IN SOUTH ASIA

1. Course description:

This course introduces students to the field of medical anthropology as it pertains to South Asia. We will examine histories of colonial medicine in South Asia and try to understand how these effect lived experiences of public health infrastructure, medicine, and healing in the contemporary.

This course will be divided into two parts. First, we will analyze how religious, cultural, political and economic structures impact health and wellbeing. Second, we will look at *ethnomedicine*, that is, how local systems of healing provide alternative ideas of illness and health, such as medical pluralism and Ayurveda.

2. Course objectives:

- a. Developing a working knowledge of key concepts in the medical anthropology of South Asia and how they impact health and wellbeing including poverty, caste, and everyday violence, etc. and to understand how ongoing public health and global health interventions respond (or do not) to these factors.
- b. Gaining hands-on knowledge and experience with complementary and alternative medicine and their relation to biomedicine in South Asia.
- c. Understanding how healing is conceptualized in cultural terms, as well as understanding how it is a relational practice.

3. Course requirements:

- a. **Leading discussion (30%)**

Every student will lead one class discussion on a reading of your choice once this quarter (in groups of two or three), lasting about 40 minutes. By noon the day before your presentation, your group should email me a lesson plan on which I will give you suggestions and comments. After you have completed your in-class discussion, you must email me a Collaborative Assessment form, which will remain confidential. This will help me assess how different members of the group contributed to the preparation.

- b. **One research paper, combining a field experience with course material (50%)**

- c. **Course participation (20%)**

Your course participation grade includes your willingness and preparedness to class every day, the quality of the questions you ask, your ability to synthesize readings, and offer analyses, and your approach to the classroom as a space of active participation, not passive learning. In addition, participation also includes the ways in which you use our fieldwork trips to facilitate your own learning about medicine in South Asia. How engaged are you during the field visits? Do you take notes and think through what you are seeing outside the classroom with our discussions inside the classroom? How enthusiastically do you participate in all class activities, and does your written and verbal work demonstrate your own intellectual growth?

4. Required texts

Das, Veena. 2015. *Affliction: Health, Disease, Poverty*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Metcalf, Barbara D. and Thomas R. Metcalf. 2012. *A Concise History of Modern India* (Third Edition). Cambridge University Press.

Pinto, Sarah. 2008. *Where There is No Midwife: Birth and Loss in Rural India*. Berghahn Books.

5. Course schedule

PART I: FOUNDATIONS

Week 1: Introduction: A “Concise” History of Modern India

Cohn, Bernard S.

1987 Notes on the History of the Study of Indian Society and Culture. In *An Anthropologist among the Historians and other Essays*. Delhi: Oxford U.P. pp. 136-69.

Ghosh, Amitav

2002 The Imam and the Indian. *The Imam and the Indian: Prose Pieces*. New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, pp. 1-13.

Metcalf, Barbara D. and Thomas R. Metcalf

2012 *A Concise History of Modern India* (Third Edition). Cambridge University Press [selections]

Week 2: Colonialism and “Making Up People”

Dirks, Nicholas B.

1992 Castes of Mind. *Representations* 37: 56-78.

Hacking, Ian

1982 Biopower and the avalanche of printed numbers. *Humanities in Society* 5: 279-295.

Raheja, Gloria Goodwin

1996 Caste, Colonialism and the Speech of the Colonized: Entextualization and Disciplinary Control in India. *American Ethnologist* 23(3): 494-513.

Week 3: Medicine in Colonial South Asia

Arnold, David

1993 *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India*. Berkeley: University of California Press [selections]

Brimmes, Niels

2004 Variolation, Vaccination and Popular Resistance in Early Colonial South India. *Medical History* 48: 199-228.

Week 4: Partition, Gendered Violence, and Silencing

Das, Veena

2007 “The Figure of the Abducted Woman” in *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*. University of California Press: Berkeley.

Sunder Rajan, Rajeswari

1993 *Life After Rape: Narrative, Rape and Feminism*. In *Real and Imagined Women: Gender, Culture, and Postcolonialism*. London and New York: Routledge.

Watch: *Khamosh Pani* (Silent Waters)

PART II: PRACTICING BIOMEDICINE THE “INDIAN” WAY

Week 5: Structural Violence and Affliction

Das, Veena. 2015. *Affliction: Health, Disease, Poverty*, Introduction – Chapter 3

Week 5: Structural Violence and Affliction, cont.

Das, Veena. 2015. *Affliction: Health, Disease, Poverty*, Chapter 4-

Week 2: Social Determinants of Health (cont.)

Claire Snell-Rood, *No One Will Let her Live: Women’s struggle for well-being in a Delhi slum* (selections)

Richa Nagar and the Sangtin Collective, *Playing with Fire* (selections)

Week 3: Medical Pluralism and Healing (in Kerala)

Stefan Ecks, *Eating Drugs: Psychopharmaceutical Pluralism in India*

Week 4: Medical Pluralism and Healing (cont...)

Murphy Halliburton, *Mudpacks and Prozac: Experiencing Ayurvedic, Biomedical and Religious Healing* (selections)

Helen Lambert, Medical Pluralism and Medical Marginality: Bone Doctors and the Selective Legitimation of Therapeutic Expertise in India. *Social Science & Medicine* 74:1029-1036.

Week 5: Refugee Health and Tibetan Medicine

“In Dharamsala: Becoming Ready for the Next Life” – *The New York Times* -

http://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/13/health/in-dharamsala-becoming-ready-for-the-next-life.html?_r=0

Sienna Craig, *Healing Elements: Efficacy and the Social Ecologies of Tibetan Medicine* (selections)

Sara E. Lewis, Trauma and the Making of Flexible Minds in the Tibetan Exile Community. *Ethos* 41(3): 313-336.

Carole McGranahan, “Narrative Dispossession: Tibet and the Gendered Logics of Historical Possibility” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52(4): 768-797.

Video on Public Anthropology/Monk Immolations:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pf2HX0IbGhw&list=PLH1gjskVWCFi5h7oy9kTaf-H-xlRbaDpK&index=4>

COURSE PROPOSAL
EVERYDAY LIFE IN SOUTH ASIA: BEYOND THE CLICHÉS
GLOBAL SEMINAR SESSION II

1. Course Description

Popular representations of South Asia abound in clichés: extreme poverty and unimaginable luxury, cosmopolitan cities and rural hamlets, ascetics and call center workers – we are all familiar with these juxtapositions in images, films, and popular books about the region. In this course, we will ask: what do these clichés do to our understanding of South Asia? Do they reveal some deeper truth about the region, or are they reflections of how South Asia has been historically imagined by others? How do we get beneath or beyond these representations?

We will respond to these questions in this course by drawing, primarily, on the work of anthropologists. One of the strengths of anthropology’s methodology—ethnography—is that it captures the complexities of everyday life. In this course, we will explore how people in South Asia live on a day-to-day basis, while also attending to how major historical events, such as colonialism and the Partition of India and Pakistan, continue to shape contemporary life and politics. Although most of our course readings will be about India, we will also draw on scholarly work from Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh, to develop a transnational perspective on the region.

While this course offers an in-depth engagement with a specific region of the world, South Asia has also been a key site from which scholars have thought through major themes, including social organization, everyday life, religion, nationalism, violence/conflict, and globalization. As such, this course also offers an engagement with anthropological theory, which will allow you to question and deconstruct dominant clichés about South Asia.

No prerequisites

2. Course Objectives

By the completion of the course, students will have developed:

- A working knowledge with historical and contemporary examples of how caste, gender, political violence, and religious practices shape everyday life in South Asia
- A basic understanding of key concepts, theoretical approaches, and issues of concern in the anthropology and historiography of South Asia
- Critical writing and thinking skills, including engaging and synthesizing multiple perspectives (both scholarly and popular), offering cogent and clear argumentation in written work, and putting class discussions and readings into a broader intellectual context

3. Course requirements

- a. Attendance and participation – 20%
- b. Short response paper – 30%
- c. Final research paper – 50%

For your final research paper, you will write a book review of a contemporary, popular, nonfiction text about South Asia for an educated but popular audience, such as the *London Review of Books* or *The New Yorker*. Your book review should be a *critical assessment* of a popular representation of South Asia, showing what anthropological, ethnographic, or historical perspectives they use, miss, or could benefit from. Your book

review should synthesize and compare different works with each other, including readings from our course as well as secondary/outside sources (unlike those publications, you will be expected to cite other scholarly works in your book reviews). Some examples of books you could write about are:

Eat, Pray, Love – Elizabeth Gilbert

Behind the Beautiful Forevers – Katherine Boo

In Spite of the Gods: The Rise of Modern India – Edward Luce

Holy Cow: An Indian Adventure - Sarah MacDonald

4. Course Schedule

There are two required books for this course:

Butalia, Urvashi. 2000. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Roy, Arundhati. 1997. *The God of Small Things*. Harper Collins: New York.

Week 1: Introduction

Bose, Sugata and Ayesha Jalal

2011 South Asian History: An Introduction. In *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-12.

Cohn, Bernard S.

1987 Notes on the History of the Study of Indian Society and Culture. In *An Anthropologist among the Historians and other Essays*. Delhi: Oxford U.P. pp. 136-69.

Ghosh, Amitav

2002 The Imam and the Indian. *The Imam and the Indian: Prose Pieces*. New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, pp. 1-13.

Week 2: Partition and its Aftermath

Butalia, Urvashi

2000 *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press (entire book).

In class film viewing: *1947 Earth*, Deepa Mehta, 1998

Possible field visit:

- Partition Museum Project (Amritsar) or visiting a museum in New Delhi that has a Partition exhibition

Week 3: Castes of Mind

Dirks, Nicholas B.

1992 Castes of Mind. *Representations* 37: 56-78.

Mines, Diane and Sarah Lamb

2010 Seven Prevalent Misconceptions about India's Caste System. *Everyday Life in South Asia*, pp. 153-4.

Raheja, Gloria Goodwin

1996 Caste, Colonialism and the Speech of the Colonized: Entextualization and Disciplinary Control in India. *American Ethnologist* 23(3): 494-513.

Film viewing: *Ankur* (the Seedling), Shyam Benegal, 1974

Short response paper due

Week 4: Representations of Caste

Roy, Arundhati. 1997. *The God of Small Things*. Harper Collins: New York.

Possible field visit:

- Visit to CRY's missions in Kerala on issues of child rights: <http://www.cry.org/projects/rights-a-society-for-human-rights/>
- Visit to Amrita University projects on caste

Week 5: Aspiration and Globalization

Liechty, Mark

2002 'Out Here in Kathmandu': Youth and the Contradictions of Modernity in Urban Nepal. In *Everyday Life in South Asia*. Diane P. Mines and Sarah Lamb, eds. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 37-47.

Chua, Jocelyn L.

2014 *In Pursuit of the Good Life: Aspiration and Suicide in Globalizing South India*. Berkeley: University of California Press (selections).

Possible field visits:

- Visit to Tibetan Youth Congress office, Dharamsala