
**Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto – ANT358 Medical
Anthropology and Social Justice**

Course Instructor: Laura Sikstrom

Class Meetings: Wednesdays, 10-12pm, room SS1069

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Office hours: Wednesdays: 12-1pm or by prior appointment, Room 348, Anthro Building
(19 Russell Street)

Course Description: It is widely acknowledged that sharp disparities in disease burden and access to medical care characterize global patterns in health. These disparities affect the life chances of much of the world's population, based on class position, gender, and geographical region. This course will address medical anthropology's contribution to understanding and combating these inequities.

Format: Lectures, readings, films, and discussion

Readings: Approximately 40-60 pages of reading per week
E-articles (available on Blackboard)

Course Requirements, Deadlines and Grading

Case Study Pt. 1	→	Sept. 26	→	5% (Pass/Fail)
Mid Term Test	→	October 15	→	20%
Case Study Pt. 2	→	November 5	→	25%
Final Test	→	November 26	→	20%
Case Study Pt. 3	→	December 3	→	30%

I). Case Study: Participant Observation (Part 1), Reflection (Part 2) and Analysis (Part 3):

“Ethnography of course means many things. Minimally however, it has always meant the attempt to understand another life world using the self – as much of it as possible – as the instrument of ‘knowing’.” - Sherry B. Ortner

What do anthropologists *do*? What is social justice and how do medical anthropologists contribute to its advancement? The case study assignment in three parts (participant observation, reflection and analysis) addresses this question by encouraging students to “do” anthropology and use their own experiences to analyse one aspect of health and social justice more generally.

Part 1: Participant Observation: Anthropologist’s main research method is *participant observation* and while doing field work we take field notes describing our experiences, the things said in casual conversations and observations of everyday life. Often we are required to engage ourselves in people’s lives by doing something – either by cooking dinner, babysitting, driving someone to a doctor’s appointment etc. Therefore, Part 1 of this assignment is designed to mimic the experience of doing anthropological field work.

For Part 1, you must participate in an act that is trying to address issues around health inequities. There are a range of activities you could participate in – the ice bucket challenge, a walk to end cancer, sign up for a foster child, buy a “Red” product, donate clothes to a health charity, write a letter to your MP, join a picket line, buy a goat for a family in need, volunteer at a hospital, write an editorial to a newspaper, donate money to a charity of your choice and so on. Try and select an activity that you feel merits sustained analysis since you will need to revisit it for parts 2 and 3.

Write your account without referring to any academic readings – just try to clearly and accurately describe what you did and why. Pay particular attention to your motivation for doing this activity and discuss your feelings, reactions and thoughts while you were engaged in your act of social justice. Why this health injustice? What about it is important to you, the world, your family or Canada? Briefly describe if any other people were involved, (doctors, nurses, friends, neighbors, or were you alone?); reflect on your feelings during the act (pleasure, pride, anger, embarrassment, empathy, apathy).

Since you will not have ethics clearance to do this activity you cannot interview anyone, but you can comment on anything said to you during the act (more on this will be discussed in class).

This should be roughly 2-3 double-spaced pages in length, and is due at the beginning of class, on the third class meeting, September 24. This is a pass/fail assignment – meaning that if you hand it in, you will get 100% for this assignment. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

If you have something in mind that falls outside these parameters please discuss with me ahead of time.

Part 2: Reflection:

After the mid-term, you will be asked to revisit this descriptive firsthand account, and write a short and coherent (3-4 page) reflective essay that critically interprets your original experience. A good paper will be clear, concise and incorporate anthropological perspectives successfully.

To do this, select ONE of the readings from class to critically examine how you might re-evaluate this act of social justice. For instance, how does your act of social justice compare to another example from class? Or, how does a specific theoretical approach help you better understand your experience? Or, how does your experience contradict something similar described in the literature?

In this account, move beyond dense description and scrutinize your own motivations, reactions and experience using anthropological points of view. Are your feelings the same about your act or different?

More details will be discussed in class and you are welcome to discuss this with me during my office hours.

This is due at the beginning of class on OCTOBER 29. **Please staple a copy of Part 1 to the back of your essay (-5% off your assignment for failing to do so).**

Part 3: Analysis.

Pick an organization that addresses the original health injustice you identified and discussed in Parts 1 and 2. For example if you wanted to address issues around food security in Toronto you could look at Food Share. This organization may work locally (such as the Wellesley Institute or United Way in

Toronto) or globally (such as Dignitas or MSF). For example, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has a program to help develop vaccines for neglected tropical diseases.

This is a research essay so you should rely on academic sources and analysis; you should have a thesis statement, evidence (from scholarly sources) and a references cited list. You must have a minimum of 5 scholarly sources (not including course material). A good paper will be clear, concise and incorporate anthropological perspectives successfully (more about this will be discussed in class).

The QUALITY OF YOUR WRITING COUNTS!!

A good essay will consider the following: 1) clearly identify what human health and social justice issue are they trying to address? How do they go about trying to improve, fix, ameliorate, or mitigate this issue? How do they justify their approach to solving this issue and how is it the same/different than other approaches? In what way did your contribution help with the bigger picture they are trying to address? 2) What do anthropologists have to say about both this problem and their approach (i.e. philanthropy, public-private partnerships, celebrities, voluntourism, behavioral approaches)? What role do you see anthropologists playing at addressing the original health issue? 3) Conclude with your final reflections on your original act of social justice. How does participant observation help us analyze aspects of health and social justice? What can anthropological perspectives provide that other approaches may not?

I strongly advise that you formulate a thesis statement (an argument based on evidence) and discuss it with me ahead of time. If your topic falls outside these parameters please discuss and get approval from me ahead of time (so the TA grading does not penalize you unfairly for not following the guidelines).

These should be approximately 8-10 pages long not including your references (no title page please). 12 point font.

This is due a week after classes finish, uploaded onto blackboard by 11:59pm on December 3rd.

Some Academic Sources and Search Engines

Society for Applied Anthropology
 Human Organisation
 Practicing Anthropology
 Social Science and Medicine
 Medical Anthropology Quarterly
 Medical Anthropology
 Anthropology and Medicine
 Health Policy and Planning
 Culture, Health and Sexuality
 Global Public Health
 Current Anthropology
 American Ethnologist
 Third World Quarterly
 World Development
 Transcultural Psychiatry
 Biosocieties

ii). Mid-Term Test – 20%

A two hour, in class mid-term covering all the lectures, films and readings from the first class to the week before the mid-term. The format will be short and long answer question **October 15**.

iii). Final Test – 20%

The same format as the mid-term scheduled for the last week of class. Material covered in the final is not cumulative, but will consist of all the readings, films and lectures from after the mid-term to the final class.

Learning Objectives

After taking this course, students should be able to:

- 1) Talk about how the methods and theories of anthropology can be applied to human health disparities around the world;
- 2) Think and write about their own observations utilizing anthropological principles and modes of analysis;
- 3) Recognize and challenge social inequalities within Canada and other societies, and in students' own communities

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's *Code of Behavior on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behavior at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Submitting the same essay for more than one course.
- Including references to sources that you did not use.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including:
 - working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work;
 - Having someone rewrite or add material to your work while "editing".

- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers
- Letting someone else look at your answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor's notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

For tips on how to reference properly, paraphrase ideas and direct quotations refer to these writing guidelines:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Grading

Every effort will be made to return assignments and tests in a timely manner and to ensure fair and consistent grading. However, if you feel that your assignment or test has been marked unfairly you must make a written request to the course instructor within three days outlining why you want a regrade. All regrades are done by the course instructor and it could result in either a higher OR lower grade. In the case of the midterm and final tests a request for a regrade will result in the entire test being regarded not just a single question.

Email

Please put ANT358H in the subject heading of all your emails so that I can respond promptly. I try and respond to emails Monday-Friday 9am-6pm. Do not expect a response to emails outside of these times (i.e. midnight the day before your test).

While email is a great tool, nothing can replace face to face conversation. I encourage everyone to find me in person during my office hours to discuss each of their assignments, the readings, lectures or medical anthropology more generally.

Missed Test

Students unable to write the midterm test at the scheduled time must inform me within seven days after the test is conducted, and must provide documentation as to why they were unable to write the test at the scheduled time to write a makeup. Students who miss the final test must write a makeup within seven days. After that they must petition the university to write a makeup. This is done through the Registrar's office.

Lectures, Films and Readings

All of the readings for this course are posted on blackboard. Films will either be available online or at Robarts library. Power point slides will be posted eventually, but my slides rarely have enough

information on them to replace good note taking by hand and class attendance. (See recent research: <http://guardianlv.com/2014/06/taking-notes-by-hand-better-than-using-laptop/>)

Late assignments policy

All late assignments will have 2% of the final grade deducted for each day late. Exceptions may be made only with prior approval from me or in the case of personal or family illnesses and emergencies. The final assignment will not be accepted after December 7th (petitions can be made through the registrar's office for serious issues).

Accessibility Services

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services Office as soon as possible.

Course Schedule

Week 1, Sept. 10: Medical Anthropologists on Social Justice

RECOMMENDED (Not Required):

- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1995. The Primacy of the Ethical: Propositions for a Militant Anthropology, *Current Anthropology* 36(3): 409-419 (The commentaries are recommended, but not mandatory reading)
- Pigg, S. 2013. On sitting and doing: Ethnography as action in global health. *Social Science and Medicine*, 99: 127-134.

Week 2, Sept. 17: Critical Medical Anthropology and the Political Economy of Health

- Hamdy, S. 2008. When the State and your Kidneys Fail, *American Ethnologist*, 35(4): 553-569.
- Farmer, Paul 2003 Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 1: Pp. 29-50.

Week 3, Sept. 24: The Social Determinants of Health

- Duke, M. 2011. Ethnicity, Well-Being and the Organization of Labor among Shade Tobacco Workers, *Medical Anthropology*, 30(4): 409-424.
- Smith-Oka, V. 2014. Fallen Uterus: Social suffering, bodily vigor and social support among women in rural Mexico. *MAQ*, 28(1): 85-104.

[FYI – Not Required Reading: Levy, J. 2013. Racialization and Health Inequities in Toronto. Toronto Public Health.]

Film: Unnatural Causes****** PART 1 Due in Class********Week 4, Oct 1: The Meaning of Health and Well Being**

- Adelson, N. 2002. Miyupimaatisiun: Being Alive Well, pp. 59-98
- Oldani, M. 2009. Uncanny scripts: understanding pharmaceutical employment in the aboriginal context, *Transcultural psychiatry*, pp. 131-156.

***** Film: The Gift of Diabetes******Week 5, October 8: Medical Humanitarianism**

- Fassin, Didier. 2007. Humanitarianism as a Politics of Life, *Public Culture*, pp. 499-520.
- Ticktin, Miriam. 2006. Where ethics and politics meet. *American Ethnologist*, 33(1): 33-49.

Week 6, October 15: IN CLASS MIDTERM**Week 7, October 22 – Humanitarian Goodwill and Heroic Shopping**

- Mostafanehzad, M. 2013. “Getting in Touch with your Inner Angelina”: celebrity humanitarianism and the cultural politics of gendered generosity in Volunteer Tourism. *Third World Quarterly*, 34(3): 485-489.
- Sitrrat, J. 2006. Competitive humanitarianism: Relief and the Tsunami in Sri Lanka. *Anthropology Today* 22(5): 11-16.
- Richey, Lisa Ann et al. 2008. Better (Red) than Dead? Celebrities, Consumption and International Aid. *Third World Quarterly*, 29(4):711-729.

Week 8, October 29: A Return to the Magic Bullet?

- Craddock, Susan. 2007. Market incentives, human lives and AIDS vaccines. *Social Science and Medicine*, 64: 1042-1056.
- Redfield, P. 2012. Bioexpectations: Life technologies as humanitarian goods. *Public Culture*, 24(1): 157-183.
- Birn, AE. 2005. Gates’ Grandest Challenge: Transcending Technology as Public Health Ideology. *The Lancet*, p.1-4.

****** Last day to withdraw without academic penalty – November 3******

Week 9, November 5: The Philanthrocapitalist Turn

- Bornstein, Erica. 2009. The Impulse of Philanthropy. *Cultural Anthropology*, 24(4): 622-651.
- McGoey, Linsey. 2014. The Philanthropic State: market-state hybrids in the philanthrocapitalist turn. *Third World Quarterly*, 35(1): 109-125.

*****PART 2: DUE IN CLASS*******Week 10, November 12: Suffering and Hunger**

- Horton, R. 2008. Maternal and child undernutrition: an urgent opportunity. *The Lancet*, pp. 1-4.
- Calain, P. 2013. Ethics and images of suffering bodies in humanitarian medicine. *Social science and medicine*, 98: 278-285.
- Hampshire, K. et al. 2009. Saving lives, preserving livelihoods: understanding risk, decision-making and child health in a food crisis. *Social Science and Medicine* 68: 758-765.

Week 11, November 19: Emerging Epidemics

- Livingston, J. 2012. Improvising Medicine: An African Oncology Ward in an Emerging Cancer Epidemic, Chapter 1 and the Interlude: pp. 1-28; pp. 85-92.
- Whitmarsh, I. The ascetic subject of compliance: The turn to chronic diseases in global health, pp. 302-324.

Week 12, November 26: FINAL IN CLASS TEST

*****Final Research Paper Due December 3rd by MIDNIGHT 11:59pm on Blackboard*****