

Introduction to Medical Anthropology
Fall 2020 ANTH 227 (crn 17639)
Professor Sandra Teresa Hyde she/her



[@iamfake/Instagram](#)

Class Time: T/TR 1:05-2:25 pm – All lectures are pre-recorded and posted as MP4 files to MyCourses. For every lecture, the last fifteen minutes will be **livestream on ZOOM** for Question/Answer time.

The FIVE Livestreamed Breakout Conferences: At the end of every module on SEPT 22, OCT 8, 29, NOV 12, NOV 24, you will be assigned to a breakout conference group for a group activity. Students will be assigned to 1 of 8 breakout discussion groups for one hour (from either 1-2 or 1:35-2:35). Note these begin **ONLY** after the add/drop period.

Teaching Assistants: Kit Mitchell they/them; other 3 TAs TBA

Course Administrative Assistant: Michelle Nadon Bélanger she/her

Description:

This undergraduate course is designed to introduce a broad range of medical anthropology topics, theoretical approaches, and research techniques by examining case studies. To do so, we are compelled to move beyond common tendencies to narrowly focus on the biological dimensions of illness and healing. Instead, we focus on how illness, health, and healing are embedded within distinct social, political, and cultural worlds - meaning the course will examine how experiences such as pain, misfortune, and ecstasy are produced and understood. We will conceptualize medical anthropology as a discipline concerned with the production of truths about bodies and environments. How are such truths produced across cultures, medical systems, and different historical periods? Such a conception of the field puts into question the hegemony of biomedicine without devaluing its ongoing contribution to human life. We will therefore be interested in the intersection of biology and culture in a variety of contexts and the ongoing dialogue between anthropology and biomedicine.

This course will be particularly attentive to the question of power both in its productive sense (e.g. the way medical technologies create new ways of being human) and its negative sense (e.g. the way social inequality produces illness). Within these discussions, our focus will be comparative treating illness, misfortune, and healing across the globe. We will consider the impact of systemic inequalities and population sciences on health and illness globally through studies of chronic illness, sorcery, modern pandemics, clinical trials, addiction, and social suffering, race, ethnicity, class, gender and systemic-blind spots, advances in bioscience, and critical public health.

Our key questions: What is medical anthropology? How do anthropologists investigate and respond to the study of pain, illness, suffering, and healing in global contexts? How do seemingly local and global cultural processes shape aspects of our bodies, such as illness, sex, and death?

Class Format:

During the Fall 2020 semester, this course is offered remotely. We will not try to reproduce the in-person classroom experience; instead, we will work together to create a lively and productive atmosphere for thought and exchange remotely by integrating recorded lectures and simultaneous Livestream discussions.

IMPORTANT - REMOTE TEACHING:

We realize not all students will be able to zoom into a workable time-zone, therefore class lectures will be prerecorded and posted at 1:00 pm on the Tuesdays and Thursdays we have class. All lectures and conference sections will be posted to MyCourses as MP4 files.

This class is an introductory survey course about the field of medical anthropology and it is organized around FIVE modules. Each class consists of two short prerecorded content lectures, e.g., think TED talks, that will tie key concepts for the week together and link them to central questions in medical anthropology. I will close with a WIZ question to provoke critical thinking and ask you to share it with your breakout group. The last 15 minutes of class will be reserved for a Livestream ZOOM Q n A session with the professor (ID and PW are posted to MyCourses).

Breakdown of recorded lectures: (As this is a new format, I ask that you remain flexible)

- 1:05 - 1:10 Introduction, announcements, housekeeping**
- 1:10 - 1:40 Mini-Concept Lecture #1**
- 1:40 - 2:10 Mini-Concept Lecture #2**
- 2:10 - 2:25* LIVESTREAM ZOOM Q n A with the professor (*approximately last 10-15 minutes of class)**

Learning Outcomes:

The course is designed to emphasize the major theoretical approaches in medical anthropology through examining case studies. At the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Explain the difference between illness and disease
2. Explain why witchcraft and biomedicine have similar models of rationality
3. Synthesize the differences and similarities between complementary, naturopathy, integrative medicine, and biomedicine
4. Analyze the bioethical and political-economic influences on health
5. Understand the links between biology and culture, race, genetics, and bioethics
6. Analyze how gender, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation inform health and disease outcomes

7. Explain the transition to global health
8. Understand why certain populations resist and oppose new scientific public health measures.
9. Describe and analyze the production of truth claims about health, illness, and suffering
10. Understand how HIV/AIDS as previous pandemic rhythms with our current COVID-19 pandemic

Required Texts:

The three books are available at Paragraphe Books (2220, McGill College Avenue) and you can order online for curbside pickup at www.paragraphebooks.com. Many of these books are available through online booksellers that have used copies available as well. All other materials and films will be made available or accessible through *MyCourses*, note the exception is the Eula Biss book.

1. **Byron Good, Michael Fischer, Sarah Willen, and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good**, 2010. *A Reader in Medical Anthropology: Theoretical Trajectories and Emergent Realities*, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell – selected chapters will be available on *MyCourses* and marked as MAR on the syllabus.
2. **Eula Biss**, *On Immunity: An Inoculation*, New York, NY: Graywolf Press, 2015. A hard copy of the book must be purchased as Canada does not have Ebook rights. It's the only book you **must buy** for this course. **Her book is currently sold out in Canada and will arrive in 2 weeks at Paragraphe Books.**
3. **Angela Garcia**, *The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession along the Rio Grande*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010. The book is available for purchase or as an Ebook accessed through the library website.
4. All other selected articles and chapters are available on our website *MyCourses*.

Documentary Films:

1. *Sir Edward E. Evans-Pritchard: Strange Beliefs*, Andre Singer, 1985 (52 mins) available **online on YouTube**.
2. *H2Oil*, Shannon Walsh, 2011 (76 mins) special link will be available just for us on **VIMEO**.
3. *How to Survive a Plague*, David France, 2012 (120 mins) available thru McGill library on **Criterion on Demand** <https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/819123809>



**MODULE ONE =
MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY: HISTORY AND SCOPE**

Just what is medical anthropology? What sorts of topics, theories, and methods do medical anthropologists use in their work? We begin this course with “proto-medical anthropology,” the rationality debate, and just what knowledge in magic and sorcery means. How does belief function as an analytic category in medical anthropology? Lectures will cover the early work in medical anthropology on medical systems as functional, adaptive systems of knowledge and practice, and then move to case studies.

Session 1 What’s at Stake? SEPT 3. – LIVESTREAM ZOOM LECTURE TODAY only!

First-class - logistics, conference section times and rooms, introduce syllabus.

Session 2 Introduction to Medical Anthropology? SEPT 8

- Margaret Lock, 2013. “Afterward: Seeing Like an Anthropologist,” in Naomi Anderson et al (ed.) *Troubling Natural Categories: Engaging the Medical Anthropology of Margaret Lock*, Pp. 209-221. **MyCourses hereafter MC.**
- Byron Good, Michael Fischer, Sarah Willen, and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, 2010. “Introduction and Setting the Stage,” in *A Reader in Medical Anthropology Hereafter MAR* Pp. 1-6 and 9-13.

Session 3 Illness and Sickness SEPT 10

- Deborah R. Gordon, 1988. “Tenacious Assumptions of Western Medicine,” in Lock and Gordon, (eds), *Biomedicine Examined*, Pp. 19-56. **MC**

Session 4 Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard: Rationality and the Problem of Belief SEPT 15

- E.E. Evans Pritchard, 1976 (reprint 2010). “The Notion Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events,” *MAR* Pp. 18-25.
- Byron Good, 1994 (reprint 2010). “Medical Anthropology and the Problem of Belief,” *MAR* Pp. 64-75.

Film: *Sir Edward E. Evans-Pritchard: Strange Beliefs, 1985. (The first 25 mins)*

Session 5 Biomedicine and Indigenous Medicine as Cultural Systems SEPT 17

- Arthur Kleinman, 1973 (reprint 2010). “Medicine’s Symbolic Reality: On a Central Problem in the Philosophy of Medicine,” *MAR* Pp. 86-90.
- Peter Wenzel Geissler, 1998. “Worms are Our Life: Part 1: Understandings of Worms and the Body among the Luo of Western Kenya,” *Anthropology and Medicine* 5 (1): 63-79. **MC**

Session 6 Breakout Group Conference Session #1 SEPT 22



**MODULE TWO =
ILLNESS NARRATIVES AND EVIDENCE-BASED MEDICINE**

How do different medical systems define health and illness; how do they treat categories of disease? What happens when Western medicine confronts folk understandings of illness in such a way that the two completely clash? We will begin this module with a discussion of illness and misfortune through what medical anthropologists often call an illness narrative. We then move toward evidence-based medicine and discuss its limitations from the perspective of social science. We will complete this module by reading a wonderful non-fiction account 'on immunity' from the perspective of a young mother and writer deciding whether to vaccinate her child. Biss' book explores what happens when different medical explanatory models and practices clash. Our purpose is to understand how biomedicine is a powerful cultural belief system that is global in its scope, creates disease categories, and produces authoritative knowledge.

Session 7 Illness Narratives SEPT 24

- Cheryl Mattingly, 1994 (reprint 2010). "The Concept of Therapeutic Emplotment" in *MAR* Pp. 121-136.
- Michael Jackson, 1998 (reprint 2010). "Myths/Histories/Lives," *MAR* Pp.137-142.

Session 8 Biomedicine, Culture and the Limits of Relativism SEPT 29

- DDR Williams and Jane Garner, 2002. "The Case Against The Evidence," *British Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 180:8-12. **MC**
- Eula Biss, 2015. *On Immunity*, select chapters TBA

Assignment #1 Available on MyCourses at 9 am: An Illness Narrative

Session 9 Social Medicine and Social Immunity OCT 1

- Eula Biss, 2015. *On Immunity*, select chapters TBA.

Session 10 Medical Pluralism: Integrative and Complementary Medicine OCT 6

- Robert Moynihan, I. Heath, and D. Henry, 2002. "Selling Sickness: The Pharmaceutical Industry and Disease Mongering," *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 324 (7342): 886-891. **MC**
- Eula Biss, 2015. *On Immunity*, select chapters TBA

Guest Lecture: Xavier Therrien, O.D., Doctor of Ostéopathie, Montréal

Session 11 Breakout Group Conference Session #2 OCT 8



MODULE THREE = WHERE THE NORMAL AND THE ABNORMAL INTERSECT

In module three we explore how bodies are treated and how the mind/body dualism is addressed in anthropological studies of science and the body. We begin with how anthropologists have explained what is called the normal and the abnormal through the famous case of the HeLa cell discovery. We then explore reproductive politics and how certain 'natural conditions' become medicalized in our case study of *Addi* (Flibanserin) for 'female sexual arousal disorder'. We conclude this module with three prominent studies that explore the biopolitics of environmental health.

Break - OCT 13 Thanksgiving and OCT 15 to work on your first essay.

DUE: Illness Narrative Essay #1 posted to MyCourses assignments by OCT 16th 5 pm

Session 12 The Racialization of Sickness and Immortality OCT 20

- Hannah Landecker, 2000 (reprint 2010). "Immortality, In Vitro: A History of the HeLa Cell Line," *MAR* Pp. 252-266.
- Clarence C. Gravlee, 2009. "How Race Becomes Biology: Embodiment of Social Inequality," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 139 (1): 47-57. **MC**
- Kim TallBear, 2013. "Genomic Articulations of Indigeneity," *Social Studies of Science* 43 (4): 509-33. **MC**

Session 13 Cultural, Medical and Scientific Constructions of Gender OCT 22

- Emily Martin, 1991. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles," *SIGNS* 10: 485-501. **MC**
- Leonore Tiefer, 2006. "Female Sexual Dysfunction: A Case Study in Disease Mongering and Activist Resistance," *PloS Medicine* Vol. 3(4): 436-440. **MC**
- Erik Parens, 2011 "On Good and Bad Forms of Medicalization," *Bioethics* DOI:10.1111/j.1467-8519.2011.01885 (online). Pp. 1-8. **MC**

Guest Lecture: Rhian Lewis, MA candidate Medical Anthropology, McGill

Session 14 Biopolitics and Environmental Health OCT 27

- Adriana Petryna, 2004 (reprint 2010). "Biological Citizenship: The Science and Politics of Chernobyl-Exposed Populations," *MAR* Pp. 200-211.
- Michelle Murphy, 2017. "Afterlife and Decolonial Chemical Relations," *Cultural Anthropology* 32 (4): 494-503. **MC**
- Elizabeth S. Roberts, 2017. "What Gets Inside: Violent Entanglements and Toxic Boundaries in Mexico City," *Cultural Anthropology* 32 (4): 563-616. **MC**

Film to watch outside of class – Shannon Walsh, *H2Oil*, on Vimeo (available up to NOV. 1st)

Session 15 Breakout Group Conference Session #3 OCT 29



MODULE FOUR = CRITICAL PUBLIC HEALTH

In module four, we shift to the instructor's area of research on understanding the production of public health from what Hyde calls a critical public health perspective. In this module, we focus on the current COVID pandemic and look through the retrospective mirror at HIV/AIDS which remains one of the most pervasive epidemics of our time. We begin by looking at the rise of Global Health and how it differs from International Health. We will view the documentary, *How to Survive a Plague*, the twenty-fifth-anniversary film about ACT-UP - the activist group that changed the face of biomedicine's response to HIV/AIDS. We conclude with three perspectives on our current COVID pandemic.

Session 16 Global Health, Global Biomedicine NOV 3

- Craig Janes and Kitty Corbett, 2009 (reprint 2010). "Anthropology and Global Health," *MAR* Pp. 405-415.
- Pimpawan Boommongkon, Mark Nichter, and Jen Pylypa, 2004 (reprint 2010). "Mot Luuk Problems in Northeast Thailand: Why Women's Own Health Concerns Matter as Much as Disease Rates," *MAR* Pp. 422-435.

Guest Lecture: Fernanda Claudio, MSc Ph.D., Director of Postgraduate Medical Education and Medical Anthropologist, Faculty of Medicine, McGill

Assignment #2 - Essay instructions available online after class

Session 17 HIV/AIDS Activism and Anthropological Sensibilities NOV 5

- Sarah Schulman, 2012. "The Gentrification of AIDS," in *The Gentrification of the Mind*, Pp 27-35. **MC**
- Moyer & Hardon's "A Disease Unlike Any Other?" **MC**
(<https://doi.org/10.1080/01459740.2014.890618>)
- Nokuthula Hlabangane, "From object to subject: Deconstructing anthropology and HIV/AIDS in South Africa," *Critique of Anthropology*, 2014, Vol. 34 (2): 174-203. **MC**

Guest Lecture: Kit Mitchell, Ph.D. Candidate, Medical Anthropology, McGill

Watch film outside of class -- *How to Survive a Plague: The Inside Story of How Citizens and Science Tamed AIDS*, Signal, director David France, 2013, (edited from original 120 mins)

Session 18 COVID and New Pandemics: Thinking Outside the Biomedical Box NOV 10

- Bonnie Henry, 2020. "Chapter Two - Humans vs Microbes," in *Soap and Water and Common Sense: The Definitive Guide to Viruses, Bacteria Parasites, and Disease*, pp. 30-71. **MC**
- Arundhati Roy, "The Pandemic is a Portal," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jwUKh3QsS8s>
- Margaret McCartney, "The Art of Medicine: Pandemics Past and Dystopian Futures," *The Lancet*, Vol. 396, August 22, 2020, pp. 526-527. **MC**

Session 19 Breakout Group Conference Session #5 NOV 12



MODULE FIVE = POSTCOLONIAL DISORDERS

In module five, we examine how local and global forces affect health and well-being, or what is called the critically interpretive medical anthropology approach. We begin with an award-winning ethnography that focuses on intergenerational illegal drug use in rural New Mexico. We are joined by Prof. Todd Meyers who reflects on his case study of teen addiction in Baltimore, Maryland. We then expand our focus to global addictions and their accompanying humanitarian responses. We conclude the course by exploring health crises as postcolonial disorders.

Session 20 Structural Violence and Drug Use in New Mexico NOV 17

- Angela García, 2010. *The Pastoral Clinic*. Read Introduction pp.1-36; **Skim** pp. 37-68.
- Helena Hansen, Caroline Parker, and Jules Netherland, 2020. "Race as a Ghost Variable in (White) Opioid Research," *Science, Technology and Human Values*. **MC**

Session 21 Social Suffering and Addiction NOV 19

- Continue reading *The Pastoral Clinic*. Second selection. Read Chapter 2 pp.69-110; **Skim** Chapter 3 pp.111-149.
- Miriam Ticktin, 2006 (reprint 2010). "Where Ethics and Politics Meet: The Violence of Humanitarianism in the Global Era," *MAR* Pp. 245-262.

Guest Interview with Prof. Todd Meyers, the Marjory Bronfman Chair in Social Studies of Medicine, McGill

DUE: Essay #2 posted to MyCourses assignments by 9 AM NOV. 19

Session 22 Addiction and Global Therapeutics NOV 24

- Continue reading *The Pastoral Clinic*. Third selection. Read Chapter 4, 5, and conclusion pp.150-210.
- Sandra Hyde, 2011. "Migrating Heroin Therapeutics: Turning Addicts into Patients & Patients into Healthy Citizens in Southwest China," *Body & Society*, Vol. 17 (2&3): 184-204. **MC**

Session 23 Breakout Group Conference Session #4 NOV 26

Session 24v Nov. 30th Final Quiz available on MyCourses at 5 pm. It will be timed - 3-hours - and you have until 5 pm on Dec. 2nd to complete it

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Essay #1	30%	Write a 3-page illness narrative essay Due online October 16 @5pm	Return to MyCourses assessment tool for your Teaching Assistant
Essay #2	30%	Write a 3-page COVID controversy essay, Due online November 22 @9am	Return to MyCourses Assessment tool for your Teaching Assistant
Final MCQ Exam	30%	Multiple choice quiz format and short answer cumulative exam. Due online December 2 @5pm	Online for the 3 hours
Participation	10%	Attend 5 unique breakout sessions OR those Asia/Pacific time-zones you can contribute to the discussion boards.	Assessed by Teaching Assistant and

(1) ESSAY ONE: You will write a short (3-page, 1.5 spacing, 12-point font) illness narrative incorporating research you will have done on virtual medical museums. This means you will tour one of four worldwide medical museums and pick a particular disease model to write a creative illness narrative about either by discussing an illness of someone you know or someone you create through fiction.

(2) ESSAY TWO: The second paper will focus on a recent medical controversy related to COVID 19. For example, masks, digital literacy, vaccines, medical evidence, medical racism, and COVID, etc. You will draw on course materials and online sources that are considered legitimate, meaning no Wikipedia or Facebook summaries – and perform an analysis of your COVID issue as if you were a medical anthropologist. You must clear your topic with your Teaching Assistant.

Policy for essay regrades: you must first discuss the essay with your TA who graded your assignment, and, then if you still want a re-grade, your TA will forward your work to me. Please note, we reserve the right to leave your grade as is, raise it **OR** lower it.

(3) FINAL QUIZ: The final quiz is comprehensive. The final quiz format is short-answer and multiple-choice and covers all five modules including lectures and all the readings. It consists of 30 MCQ questions and 10 fill in short answers and you have 3-hours to complete it. It will be available on Nov. 30th at 5 pm and due on Dec. 2nd at 5 pm.

(4) THE FIVE LIVESTREAM BREAKOUT CONFERENCES: Five conference sessions via Zoom provide a space to meet with 30-35 classmates, who will be your virtual discussion and support team for the semester. We plan to have you meet among yourselves and then you with Teaching Assistant to discuss, clarify, and debate the concepts and materials presented in lectures. These (5) sections are in the place of prerecorded lectures and **required**.

Breakout Conferences meet either **1:00-2:00pm OR 1:35-2:35**. Every student registered will be assigned to 1 of 8 groups that meet during class time on **Synchronous Livestream ZOOM**.

Note about time-zone exceptions: I do not expect every single person to speak in every section, but by the end of the semester, I would like everyone to have contributed to your virtual conference discussions, either virtually on zoom, or for those unable to zoom in due

to time-zone conflicts (students living in Asia and the Pacific), you can post ideas and questions to the discussion board for that module.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

To conduct a class of this size especially during this COVID term, we ask that students take responsibility for late papers and exams. Although sometimes inevitable, we mark down 1 point off your final grade for every day your essay or exam is late, e.g., if your final grade was 82 and your paper was late by two days, your new grade is 80. Acceptable excuses include death certificates, funeral notices, medical, or, COVID related emergencies.

COURSE REGISTRATION GLITCH:

Please note you **cannot take two classes simultaneously** and there will be NO exceptions. This is going to be a challenging semester and you must take one class at a time; we are teaching remotely NOT ONLINE. Meaning we will not make accommodations for students who violate this policy, meaning you are required to attend all conference sections on zoom as you are graded on participation. For those concerned about confidentiality, they may turn off their camera and/or assign themselves a nickname.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY:

All course content, including slides, zoom video recordings, lecture notes, assignment questions, and instructions, etc. remain the instructor's intellectual property. You may certainly use all course materials for your own learning needs. However, you are not permitted to disseminate or share these materials; doing so violates the instructor's and the university's intellectual property rights and is cause for disciplinary action.

EMAIL POLICY: Unless confidential, please post your questions to the ANTH 227 discussion boards on MyCourses so everyone can see the answers. Second, before sending individual questions, please carefully review the syllabus and check the discussion boards for common answers. As this is going to be a very time consuming and challenging semester for all of us, I kindly ask that everyone use their **official McGill email** and email us only during working hours 9-5 pm inclusive.

OFFICE HOURS:

TA Office hours will be online and organized through an online appointment tool. TA office hours will be made available **after** the add/drop period. For queries not on the discussion boards, you are expected to consult your TA first, before consulting the professor, regarding grades, exams, and concerns about the course.

ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: We will do our best to accommodate students with disabilities. If this pertains to you, I encourage you to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities (514-398-6009 or 1010 Sherbrooke Ouest, suite 410) so that we can provide necessary accommodations as soon as possible. (<https://www.mcgill.ca/osd>).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offenses under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (approved by Senate on 29 January 2003) (<http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/>) Please note the syllabus will most likely change with the needs of the students taking this class and due to our uncertain COVID pandemic.

WRITTEN LANGUAGES: Following McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students have the right to submit all written assignments in English OR French.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT: McGill University is located on unceded indigenous territory. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of territory and waters on which McGill stands. Tiotiá:ke/Montreal is historically a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population and we respect the continued connections with the past, present, and future in our ongoing relationship with the Indigenous and diverse populations that live here.