

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



[@iamfake/Instagram](#)

Class Time: T/TR 1:05-2:25pm on Livestream synchronous on **Zoom** and recorded to MyCourses

Breakout Conference Sessions: In place of **zoom** lectures on SEPT 22, OCT 8, 29, NOV 17, NOV 26; you will be assigned to a breakout conference group for a synchronous group activity for 15 mins. and then a 45-minute Q and A session with your TA. 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 **ONLY** start after the add/drop period.

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

Course Assistant: Michelle Nadon Bélanger she/her

NEW Email policy for COVID term: Unless your communication is confidential, please post your questions to ANTH 227 discussion board on MyCourses as other students will most likely have similar questions or concerns. Second, before you start sending us questions, please make sure to carefully review the syllabus and check the discussion board for common answers. At this time, given the size of the class, we cannot answer all your questions immediately.

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 and human guinea pigging, 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 online. 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 online. We will meet synchronously on **livestream zoom** (accessed through MyCourses along with the password).

IMPORTANT - REMOTE TEACHING:

We realize not all students will be able to zoom into a workable time zone. Since the course meets from 1-2:30pm, everyone across Canada and Europe will be able to zoom in. For those students in Asia and Australia, for example, you will be able to review the post-class recording of the lectures and conference sections – posted to MyCourses.

This class is an introductory survey course about the field of medical anthropology and it is organized around FIVE modules that draw on key topics in medical anthropology. I will begin each class with two short 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 to share with your breakout group. After the first mini lecture, there will be a 5-minute break, and then after the second lecture, whatever time we have leftover will be reserved for a Q n A with the professor.

Breakdown of class time on zoom: (leaving room for flexibility on both the topic and you)

1:05 - 1:10	Introduction, announcements, housekeeping
1:10 - 1:40	Mini-Concept Lecture #1
1:40 - 1:45	Short break
1:45 - 2:15	Mini-Concept Lecture #2
2:15 - 2:25	Q n A with professor

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 a 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 web online bookshops that have used copies available as well. All other materials and films will be made available or accessible through *MyCourses*.

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.
2. **Eula Biss**, *On Immunity: An Inoculation*, New York, NY: Graywolf Press, 2015. 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!
3. **Angela Garcia**, *The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession along the Rio Grande*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010. 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) available thru McGill library on **Kanopy**.
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

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*, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press. Pp. 209-221. **MyCourses hereafter MC.**
- Byron Good, MJ Fischer, S Willen and MJ 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

- Gordon, Deborah R. 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 Geissler and P. Wenzel, 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, and 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 illness narrative. We then move toward the common tool called evidence-based medicine and then 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. Or in other words, a way to explore 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

- Mattingly, Cheryl. 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

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

Session 9 Social Medicine and Social Immunity OCT 1

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

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

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

Session 11 Breakout Group Conference Session #2 OCT 8



MODULE THREE = THE INTERSECTION OF THE NORMAL AND THE ABNORMAL

Here we begin to explore just how bodies are treated and how the mind/body dualism is addressed in anthropological studies of science and the body. We will 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 ADI 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 due to MyCourses assignment tool by OCT 16th 5pm

Session 12 The Racialization of Sickness and Immortality OCT 20

- Landecker, Hannah. 2000 (reprint 2010). "Immortality, In Vitro: A History of the HeLa Cell Line," *MAR* Pp. 252-266.
- Gravlee, Clarence C. 2009. "How Race Becomes Biology: Embodiment of Social Inequality." *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 139 (1): 47-57.
- TallBear, Kim. 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.
- Leonore Tiefer, 2006. "Female Sexual Dysfunction: A Case Study in Disease Mongering and Activist Resistance," *PloS Medicine* Vol. 3(4): 436-440.
- Erik Parens, 2011 "On Good and Bad Forms of Medicalization," *Bioethics* doi:10.1111/j.1467-8519.2011.01885 (online). Pp. 1-8.

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.
- Murphy, Michelle. 2017. "Alter life and Decolonial Chemical Relations." *Cultural Anthropology* 32 (4): 494-503. **MC**
- Roberts, Elizabeth S. 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 **Kanopy**.

Session 15 Breakout Group Conference Session #3 OCT 29



**MODULE FOUR =
CRITICAL PUBLIC HEALTH**

In this module, we shift to the instructor's areas of research on understanding the production of public health from what Hyde calls a critical public health perspective. In this module we focus on current COVID pandemic and think through the retrospective mirror at HIV/AIDS which still remains one of the most pervasive epidemics of our time. We also investigate what is called guinea-pigging in clinical trials. We sum up this module with the twenty-fifth year anniversary film about ACT-UP, the activist group that changed the face of biomedicine's response to HIV/AIDS in North America.

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 Pylpa, "Mot Luuk Problems in Northeast Thailand: Why Women's Own Health Concerns Matter as Much as Disease Rates," 2004 (reprint 2010) *MAR* pp. 422-435.

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

Assignment #2 - Essay instructions available online after class

Session 17 Human Guinea Pigging and Clinical Trials NOV 5

- Mary Jo DelVecchio-Good, 2007 (reprint 2010). "The Medical Imaginary and the Biotechnical Embrace: Subjective Experiences of Clinical Scientists and Patients," *MAR* Pp. 273-283.
- Kaushik Sunder Rajan, 2007 (reprint 2010). "Experimental Values: Indian Clinical Trials and Surplus Health," *MAR* Pp. 377-387.

Optional Reading:

- Leslie Jamison, "The Empathy Exams,"

Session 18 HIV/AIDS Activism and Anthropological Sensibilities NOV 10

- Sarah Schulman's "The Gentrification of AIDS" (Chapter 2 from *The Gentrification of the Mind*)
- Moyer & Hardon's "A Disease Unlike Any Other?" (<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.

Guest Lecture: Kit Mitchell, PhD 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 19 COVID and New Pandemics: Thinking Outside the Biomedical Box NOV 12

- Bonnie Henry, 2020, *Soap and Water and Common Sense: The Definitive Guide to Viruses, Bacteria Parasites and Disease*, Toronto, ON: Anansi Press. "Chapter Two - Humans vs Microbes," pp. 30-71.
- Arundhati Roy, "The Pandemic is a Portal," Financial Times, April 3, 2020. <https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca>

Session 20 Breakout Group Conference Session #5 NOV 17



MODULE FIVE = POSTCOLONIAL DISORDERS

In this final and fifth module, we examine how local and global forces affect health and well-being, or what is called the critical medical anthropology approach. We begin with an award-winning ethnography that focuses on intergenerational illegal drug use in rural New Mexico. 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 21 Structural Violence and Drug Use in New Mexico NOV 19

- Angela García, 2010. *The Pastoral Clinic*. Read Introduction pp.1-36; **Skim** pp. 37-68.
- Helena Hansen, Caroline Parker and Jules Netherland, "Race as a Ghost Variable in (White) Opioid Research," *Science, Technology and Human Values*, March 30, 2020.

Due: Essay #2 to MyCourses assignment tool by 9AM NOV. 19

Session 22 Social Suffering and Addiction NOV 22

- 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 Lecture: Todd Meyers, Marjory Bronfman Chair in Social Studies of Medicine, McGill

Session 23 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 24 Breakout Group Conference Session #4 NOV 26

Session 25 Dec. 2nd Final Quiz available on MyCourses at 9am. It will be timed – 3-hours - and you have until 5pm to complete it.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Essay #1	25%	Write a 3-page illness narrative essay Due online October 16 @5pm	Return to MyCourses assessment tool for your Teaching Assistant
Essay #2	25%	Write a 3-page COVID controversy essay, Due online November 19 @9am	Return to MyCourses Assessment tool for your Teaching Assistant
Final Quiz	35%	Multiple choice quiz format and short answer cumulative exam. Due online December 2 @5pm	Online for 3-hour period
Participation	15%	Attend 5 unique breakout sessions OR those Asia/Pacific time-zones you can contribute to the discussion boards.	Assessed by Teaching Assistant

(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 all-day Dec. 2nd.

(4) THE FIVE UNIQUE BREAKOUT GROUP CONFERENCES: As part of the required hours for this course, you will attend every fifth class as a breakout conference discussion group. As we are trying to maximize your access to teaching assistants, you will meet for 1 hour, 15 minutes with your group and 45 minutes with your Teaching Assistant. These sections are in place of lecture and **required**. Discussion sections offer you the opportunity to meet virtually with approximately 35 students and your TA to discuss, clarify and debate the concepts and materials presented in lectures. Registered students will be divided into 8 sessions, 2 per teaching assistant. See note below about exceptions.

There are two different conference times and you will be assigned to 1 of 8 groups that meet during class time either from **1:00-2:00pm OR 1:35-2:35** for our singular five group conference days.

Note about conference breakout groups and time-zone exceptions: These five unique conference breakout sessions are a space where you can meet with your classmates, who will be your virtual conference section for the term. In these sessions not every group member is expected to speak in every class, but by the end of the semester I would like everyone to have contributed in your virtual conference discussions, either virtually on zoom, or for those unable to zoom into at the exact time (students living in Asia and the Pacific), you can post to the discussion board for that module.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

In order 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 1/3 a grade (e.g. A- to B+) for every day an exam/paper is late. Acceptable excuses include death certificates, funeral notices, or doctor's notes.

COURSE REGISTRATION:

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. In order to protect confidentiality, those in attendance may both turn off their camera and assign themselves a nickname, provided you inform your teaching assistant (remember they will be assigning you participation grades).

OFFICE HOURS:

TA Office hours will be online and organized through Google Doc appointments. TA office hours will be made available after 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.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY:

As this is going to be a very time consuming and challenging semester for all of us, I kindly ask that you email us, using your **official McGill email**, during working hours 9-5pm inclusive. If you send emails after those hours, we will not answer them.

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 offences 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.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY:

All content of this course, including slides, 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.

WRITTEN LANGUAGES: In accordance with 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.