Health, Biology, and Culture:  
Introduction to Medical Anthropology  
ANTH 4540/6540 

Spring 2009  
Tuesday, Thursday, 12:30-1:45 

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course, modifications may be necessary, and will be announced to the class by the instructor.

Instructor: Dr. Susan Tanner, 266 Baldwin Hall, Jackson Street, Office Phone: 542-3085  
E-mail: stanner1@uga.edu,  
Office Hours: Wednesday 2:30 – 4:00 or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Lisa Chaudhari 205A Baldwin Hall, Lab Phone: 542-1430  
E-mail: shanti@uga.edu  
Office Hours: Thursday 2:00-3:00 or by appointment

Course Description and Scope  
What is health? How is health studied in a cross-cultural, global perspective? How does culture shape health and disease patterns? How do medical systems vary and how do people make choices relating to their health care? How is health best studied? This course provides an introduction to the field of medical anthropology from an ecological, biocultural, and economic perspective. Drawing on case studies and two ethnographic texts, we will examine how anthropology and the social sciences have addressed issues of health in a global context. We will begin the semester with an introduction to the study of health in anthropology. After discussing the basic theoretical frameworks, we will consider problems of nutrition, reproduction and infectious disease. In the final portion of the course, we will focus on the health consequences of culture change and applied medical anthropology.

Throughout the course, the student will be expected to develop:  
- A broad factual understanding of how culture and society shape health.  
- A clear understanding of the theoretical base of medical anthropology.  
- An understanding of the role and applicability of anthropology in global health.  
- Communication and writing skills consistent with their academic and/or professional goals.

Assessment: This is an upper division course. I expect that students will take a high degree of responsibility for their learning including regular class attendance, active participation in classroom discussions, careful attention to reading material, timely completion of course related activities and assignments, and professional interactions with peers in the course.

Your grade will reflect your performance on:  
1) Class attendance and participation  
2) Two in class exams  
3) Annotated bibliography and summary  
4) Writing assignments  

10%  
40%  
30%  
20%  
100%

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Class attendance and participation (10% total): This is an upper level course and you are expected to attend and actively participate in class. Participation requires that you read all assigned readings and come to class with your thoughts and questions on the readings. In order to facilitate this, we will have short in class writing assignments or small discussion sessions.

WebCT: You are responsible for checking WebCT on a regular basis. We will post announcements and additional information. You are encouraged to post responses to the announcements or relevant course themes. Responses will be counted as class participation.

Two in-class exams (20% each). We will have two in-class exams that are designed to test your comprehension of the topics and readings for the course. The first will occur on Feb 24 and the second during exam week.

Research presentation (30%): You will prepare a class presentation of a research topic in the last weeks of the semester. Instructions will be provided on WebCT.

Writing assignments (20%): You will be expected to complete additional assignments throughout the semester on topics related to course material. Assignments will be assigned two weeks before the project is due. More information will be provided.

Graduate Students: In addition, graduate students will be expected to prepare a research paper on a topic of their choosing and present their research to the class throughout the semester.

Course Materials:

Required materials

Coursepack will be available at Bel-Jean (163 E Broad Street, 706.548.3648).

Recommended readings. In addition to the required readings above, graduate students and interested undergraduates may also benefit from:

Recommended journals: Social Science and Medicine, Medical Anthropology Quarterly. Society for Medical Anthropology: http://www.medanthro.net/definition.html
**Course Outline:** This schedule is subject to change with notification. All modifications will be posted on Web CT. It is your responsibility to check Web CT weekly for updates.

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<th>Week of</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments and Events</th>
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<td>Jan 8</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>Jan 12</td>
<td>Defining health, illness, and disease</td>
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<td>Jan 19</td>
<td>Health: Biology and culture</td>
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<td>Jan 26</td>
<td>Health: Culture and society</td>
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<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>Healing traditions and medical pluralism</td>
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<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>Food and the body</td>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
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<td>Feb 16</td>
<td>Nutrition, growth, and child health</td>
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<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>Health and reproductive rights</td>
<td>Tues: Exam 1</td>
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<td>Mar 2</td>
<td>Mothers and infants</td>
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<td>Mar 9</td>
<td>Spring break</td>
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<td>Mar 16</td>
<td>Anthropology and infectious disease</td>
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<td>Mar 23</td>
<td>Infections and inequality</td>
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<td>March 30</td>
<td>Infections and inequality</td>
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<td>April 6</td>
<td>Health and culture change</td>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
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<td>April 13</td>
<td>Health and culture change</td>
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<td>April 20</td>
<td>Applied medical anthropology</td>
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<td>April 27</td>
<td>Conclusion and discussion</td>
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<td>May 4</td>
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**Course policies:**

**Late assignments and/or make-up exam:** You are required to complete all assignments by the due date. Make-up exams or extensions will be given at the professor’s discretion provided that you have notified me at least 2 days in advance of your absence OR you have a documented medical justification.

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:** All UGA students and faculty are expected to adhere to the principles of academic honesty and integrity. All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” All students are responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be punished following the guidelines provided in the above documents. If you have any questions or concerns regarding issues of academic integrity, please do not hesitate to speak with me immediately. This policy can be found online at [http://www.uga.edu/honesty/aepd/culture_honesty.htm](http://www.uga.edu/honesty/aepd/culture_honesty.htm)

**Students with Special Needs:** If you have a disability and would like to request classroom accommodations, arrangements are made through the Disability Resource Center (542-8719). Please notify me in advance and we will follow the instructions provided in their letter.
Course Readings: These readings are subject to change. Any modifications will be announced in class and posted on Web CT. It is your responsibility to be aware of these announced changes.

Jan 9: Introduction
Syllabus; course expectations (yours and mine)
Voices from the Sahel

Jan 13/15: Defining health, illness, and disease
Tues: History and scope of field, studying health in anthropology
Joralemon Ch 1 (p.1-16)

Thurs: What is health? How does medical anthropology study health?
Wiley Ch 2 (p.16-29)
World Health Organization. 1948. Definition of Health
http://www.who.int/about/definition/en/print.html
World Health Organization web-site: http://www.who.int/en/
International Disease Classification 10 (ICD-10): http://www.who.int/classifications/icd/en/

Additional readings for week:
Trostle Ch 1-2

Jan 20/22. Health: Bridging biology and culture
Tues: The Biocultural approach
Wiley Ch 3 (p. 30-43)

Thursday: The Biocultural approach

Additional readings:

Jan 27/29: Health: Bridging biology, society and culture
Tuesday: Political-ecology and critical medical anthropology
Wiley Ch 4 (p. 44-57)

**Thursday:** Disease as a metaphor and the interpretive approach

**Additional readings:**

**Feb 3/5: Healers and Healing Systems**
**Tuesday:** Healers and healing systems
Wiley Ch 6 (p.70-88)
OR

**Thursday:** Medical Pluralism
Video: Healers of Ghana. 69 minutes.

**Additional readings:**
Trostle, Ch 7

**Feb 10/12: Food and the body**
**Tuesday:** Food and nutrition

**Thursday:** Food and nutrition
Start reading Detwlyer Dancing Skeletons.

**Additional readings:**

Feb 17/19: Nutrition, growth, and child health
Finish reading Detwlyer. Dancing Skeletons.
Tuesday: Food and health
Thursday: Discussion of Detwlyer reading

Additional readings:
Trostle Ch 4

Feb 24/46: Health and reproductive rights
Tuesday (Feb 24): Exam 1 in class

Thursday:
WHO Female circumcision: http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/fgm/index.html

Additional Readings

March 3/5: Health and reproduction
Tuesday: Mothers and children

Thursday: Parenting and children
TBA

March 17/19: Culture and Infectious Disease
Tuesday: History, culture and infectious disease
Wiley Ch 5 (p. 58-69)

Thursday: Today the Hawk takes one more Chick
Start Reading Farmer, Infections and Inequalities.

Additional Readings:
March 24/26: Infections and inequalities
Reading for week: Farmer, Infections and Inequalities (p. Introduction – p.150)
Additional reading: Trostle, Ch 5

Tuesday: Infections and Inequalities
Thursday: Discussion of Infections and Inequalities

March 31/April 2: Infections and inequalities
Reading for week: Farmer. Infections and Inequalities (p.150 to end of book)

Tuesday: Infections and Inequalities
Thursday: TBA

April 7/9: Health, culture change and disease
Tuesday: How does culture change impact health? Is change good, bad or both?

Thursday: Studying ‘modernization’

Additional Reading:
Trostle, Ch 3

April 14/16: Health, culture change and disease
Tuesday: Culture change in Africa

Thursday: Culture change in South America
Godoy et al. Culture change and health among the Tsimane’ of Bolivia. Unpublished manuscript.
Izquierdo C. 2005. When ‘health’ is not enough: societal, individual and biomedical assessments of well-being among Matsigenka of the Peruvian Amazon. Social Science and Medicine 61:767-783.

Additional Reading

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April 21/23: Applied anthropology: ethics and interpretation
   Tuesday:
   Wiley Ch 7-8 (p. 89-123)

   Thursday:

Additional Readings:

April 28: Wrapping up
   Tuesday: What have we learned? Where to go from here?
   Wiley Ch 9 (p.124-131)