ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES IN GLOBAL HEALTH

ANTH S462
Summer Session B 2020
June 29 – July 31
TTh 1-4:15 pm
Anthropology, 10 Sachem, Room 105

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THIS IS A TECHNOLOGY-FREE COURSE!

Course Description

This seminar is designed to explore anthropological approaches to global health, through reading and discussing award-winning ethnographies and films. The course will focus on four major themes, including (1) infections and inequalities, (2) child survival, (3) gender matters, and (4) healthcare and humanitarianism. Within these four themes, many exigent global health problems will be examined, including HIV/AIDS, malaria, obstetric emergencies, the global polio campaign, infertility, and the health costs of war and displacement. The underlying purpose of this course is to develop students’ awareness of the political, socioeconomic, ecological, cultural, and organizational complexity of most global health problems, and the consequent need for anthropological sensitivity, contextualization, and activist commitment.

Throughout the course, the politics of global health problems and interventions will be examined from the point of view of nation-states, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and humanitarian actors. Efforts to respond to global health crises, often in the absence of adequate resources and political will, will be interrogated in the final section on humanitarianism and the work of NGOs.

Ultimately, however, this course is about “people first.” Through reading and discussing ethnographies that show how people themselves grapple with tough global health problems, students will reflect on issues of social justice and the right to health for people living in resource-poor and post-conflict settings, from Latin America and the Caribbean, to sub-Saharan Africa, to the Middle East. The role of the United States and Europe in both producing and mitigating global health crises will also be critically examined.

Learning Objectives and Course Goals

1) To learn about anthropological and ethnographic research approaches to global health
2) To become familiar with key thinkers, research themes, and intellectual debates
3) To understand the relevance of medical anthropology for the understanding of global health issues and interventions
4) To read and critically assess award-winning anthropological ethnographies and films
5) To develop and hone seminar leadership skills
6) To master the art of writing an academic book review and a comparative book review essay

**Academic Ethics and Integrity:**

If you have any questions about what does or does not constitute plagiarism, please ask! Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be treated lightly. Fortunately, it is also easy to avoid and if you are the least bit careful about giving credit where credit is due you should not run into any problems. You must document all of your source material. If you take any text from somebody else, you must make it clear the text is being quoted and where the text comes from. You must also cite any sources from which you obtain numbers, ideas, or other material. In this class, we will be writing book reviews, and your book reviews must be entirely original (i.e. your own descriptions and analysis).

Finally, Yale punishes academic dishonesty severely. The most common penalty is suspension from the university, but students caught plagiarizing are also subject to lowered or failing grades as well as the possibility of expulsion. Please be sure to review Yale’s Academic Integrity Policy.

**Course Assignments**

**Keeping Up, Being There, Breaking the Silence:** This seminar is intended to be a respectful reading group, where we engage with each other, courteously and constructively, in a thoughtful and reflexive conversation about the relationship between anthropology and global health, as exemplified through a series of eight compelling ethnographies to be read and discussed together in class (along with an optional ninth ethnography). Your major assignment is to keep up with these readings, being there during each class session, and “breaking the silence,” individually and collectively, about many important global health issues that are rarely discussed. Everyone is expected to participate in these conversations, which are intended to be very friendly, informal, but nonetheless thought-provoking and rigorous. You will be evaluated in this course in large part on your classroom engagement over the course of the summer session. **Attendance at every class is required. 15% of the total grade**

**Leading a Discussion:** Each participant in this seminar will lead one seminar discussion. We will decide this schedule on the first day of class. As discussion leader, you are expected to briefly (no more than 10 minutes) introduce the author and some of the interesting themes/ideas of the day’s book in a structured but informal manner (i.e., no reading of something you have written up). As part of your role as discussion leader, you should assemble a list of what you consider to be the four key questions raised by the book. The first question should deal with methodological issues, and the second and third questions should be thematic. The final question should deal with policy implications. All questions should be indicated with a descriptive subhead. Your job as seminar leader is to systematically cover these questions during the course of the discussion, as well as run
the seminar more generally. Questions should be sent the evening before class (by 5 pm, Word document, emailed) to Dr. Inhorn, who will look over, revise with you, and print out copies of the final question set. Examples of question sets will be provided during the first week of class. **15% of the total grade (5% question construction, 10% seminar leadership)**

**Book Reviews:** During the course, each student will write two, 2-page, single-spaced book reviews, focusing on books from different sections of the course. The book reviews should provide a) a compelling introductory paragraph, b) a brief description of the book’s setting and methodology, c) a descriptive summary of the book’s content (major arguments, themes, issues, empirical findings), d) analysis of the book’s major strengths, e) analysis of the book’s major weaknesses, and f) potential audiences, including academic disciplines. The first page and top of second page should focus on a) –c). Most of the second page should focus on d) – f). An example of a book review will be provided during the first week of class. These short book reviews are preparation for the longer comparative book review. Book reviews are due as hard copies, to be turned into Marcia at the beginning of class on the day in which the book is being discussed. **Please turn in one of these book reviews by the third week of class (Thursday, July 16). 20% each, 40% of the total grade**

**Comparative Book Review Essay:** Each participant in this seminar will write one final, double-spaced paper, comparing two of the ethnographies that have not been covered in the individual book reviews. The review should be written in *Reviews in Anthropology* format; instructions and an example will be provided. Your essay should summarize and review each book, just as you have done for the individual book reviews. But, as a comparative book review, the essay should also be explicitly synthetic, examining similarities and differences and attempting to outline some common theme(s). The final third of the paper should be dedicated to this comparative, synthetic analysis, concluding with the potential audiences for each of the books. References to other books are allowed in the essay, but are not required. This essay is due on Friday, July 31, by 5 pm. **30% of the total grade**

**Schedule of Readings** (All books available at Yale Bookstore and on reserve in Bass Library.)

**I. Infections and Inequalities: The Persistence of HIV/AIDS**

June 30  
Introduction to the Course and Film, “Bending the Arc” (on Paul Farmer, Jim Kim, and the work of Partners in Health)

July 2  
Paul Farmer, *AIDS and Accusation: Haiti and the Geography of Blame*

July 7  
Robert Wyrod, *AIDS and Masculinity in the African City: Privilege, Inequality, and Modern Manhood*
II. Child Survival: The Challenges of Healthcare Delivery

July 9  Vinay Kamat, *Silent Violence: Global Health, Malaria, and Child Survival in Tanzania*

July 14 Svea Closser, *Chasing Polio in Pakistan: Why the World’s Largest Public Health Initiative May Fail*

III. Gender and Health: Maternal Morbidity and Mortality

July 16 Allison Heller, *Fistula Politics: Birthing Injuries and the Quest for Continence in Niger*

July 21 Nicole Berry, *Unsafe Motherhood: Mayan Maternal Mortality and Subjectivity in Post-war Guatemala*

IV. Conflict and Health: Refugees and Medical Humanitarianism

July 23 Ramah McKay, *Medicine in the Meantime: The Work of Care in Mozambique*

July 28 Marcia Inhorn, *America’s Arab Refugees: Vulnerability and Health on the Margins* (Presentation by Dr. Inhorn; Reading the book is optional; can be used for comparative final book review)

July 30 Middle Eastern Lunch with Film, “Contagion”

July 31 Final Comparative Book Review Due, Marcia’s Anthropology Mailbox, No Later than 5 pm