

# GLOBAL HEALTH ETHNOGRAPHY

ANTH S462

Summer Session B 2025

June 30-August 1

MW 6-9:15 pm EST

Room 105, Anthropology, 10 Sachem

Prof. Marcia C. Inhorn

[marcia.inhorn@yale.edu](mailto:marcia.inhorn@yale.edu)

Office Hours: By Email Appointment and Zoom

## Course Description

This seminar is designed to explore anthropological approaches to global health. Through reading and discussing eight cutting-edge anthropological ethnographies and watching four award-winning films, students will come to understand how anthropologists study, write about, and intervene in global health crises. Recent major pandemics, including COVID-19, HIV/AIDS, and Ebola, will be examined. Their disparate impacts on the world's children, women, and men will be explored, as well as how differences in resources and responses between nations impact the course of epidemics. The course also interrogates how nation-states produce health crises, including through violence, asking what states owe their citizens in terms of reproductive, physical, and mental health.

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 preparedness, medical resources, and political will, will be studied. The underlying purpose of this course, then, is to develop students' awareness of the political, socioeconomic, ecological, cultural, and organizational complexity of most global health crises, and the consequent need for anthropological sensitivity, contextualization, and activist commitment. The course will end with a critical anthropological assessment of how global health as a field has—or has not—produced salubrious health-promoting outcomes.

Ultimately, as an anthropology seminar, this course puts “people first.” Through reading and discussing ethnographies that show how people themselves grapple with tough global health problems and challenges, students will reflect on issues of social justice and the right to health for people living in resource-poor and post-conflict settings, primarily in Africa, but also in Latin America and the Middle East. The role of the United States 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 understand the complexities of recent pandemics and responses to them

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

### **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). *Please refrain from reading published book reviews of any of the books in this course!*

Finally, Yale punishes academic dishonesty severely. This includes 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 the Poorvu Center's discussion of plagiarism and academic integrity at:

<https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/writing/using-sources/understanding-and-avoiding-plagiarism/what-plagiarism>

### **Writing Tutors**

Summer session students are encouraged to make an appointment for writing support. Staffed by Yale undergrads and graduate students, the Yale College Writing Center offers free, one-on-one writing help to all students enrolled in Yale Summer Session. To reserve an appointment or drop-in during a Zoom shift, visit: <https://yaleuniversity.mywconline.com/>.

### **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 our biweekly seminar. 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 currently changing our world in unprecedented ways. Everyone is expected to participate in these seminar 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 seminar engagement over the course of the summer session. **Attendance at every class is required. 20% of the total grade**

**(Co) Leading a Seminar Discussion:** Each participant in this seminar will (co) lead one seminar discussion. We will decide this schedule on the first day of class. As part of your role as discussion (co) leaders, you are expected to *briefly* (no more than 10 minutes, five minutes each) introduce some of the interesting themes/ideas of the day's book that do not necessarily get covered in your question set. Your introductory presentation should be structured but informal (i.e., please use notes, but no reading of something you have written up). As co-leaders, you should assemble also assemble 10 questions into a question set, two examples of which are posted in the Files section on CANVAS. The first group of three questions should deal with methodological issues. The second and third set of questions (three questions each) should address the books' major themes and ethnographic findings. The final question (number ten) should deal with policy implications. Please divide these sections with a descriptive subhead. Question sets should be sent the afternoon of class (by 2 pm EST, Word document, emailed) to Marcia, who will look over, revise with you over the next hour or so, and post the final question set on CANVAS. At the beginning of class, Marcia will briefly introduce the author and the day's topic. Then you will take over and lead the seminar discussion. Your job as seminar (co) leaders is to systematically cover these questions during the course of the discussion, as well as run the seminar more generally. Marcia will ask you to elaborate on relevant points throughout the seminar discussion. **25% of the total grade (10% question set construction, 5% introductions, 10% seminar leadership)**

**Reading Responses:** For each book, Marcia will post a question in CANVAS Assignments. By 6 pm before class, please post a 200-250 word response to the question in CANVAS. These responses should demonstrate your close reading of the text, answering the question by including ethnographic findings from the book. Five of these responses are due over the course of the seminar. **5 x 3% each, 15% of the total grade**

**Book Reviews:** During the course, each student will write two, 2-page, single-spaced, 12-point font book reviews, focusing on books from different sections of the course. The book reviews should provide a) a compelling introductory paragraph, b) a second paragraph describing the book's setting, research methodology, and time frame, c) two to three paragraphs providing a descriptive summary of the book's content (major arguments, themes, issues, ethnographic findings), d) one paragraph analyzing the book's major strengths, e) one paragraph analyzing the book's major weaknesses, and f) a final paragraph describing potential audiences, including which academic disciplines would most benefit from reading the book. The first page to the top of second page should focus on a) –c). Most of the second page should focus on d) – f). Several examples of good book reviews are posted as Files in CANVAS. Book reviews are to be submitted as WORD documents in Assignments in CANVAS at the beginning of class on the day in which the book is being discussed. No late reviews will be accepted. You *can* write about the book you (co) led in the seminar. Please turn in one of these book reviews by Monday, June 12. **20% each, 40% of the total grade**

## **Schedule of Readings**

(All books are available electronically through Yale Library and are in the CANVAS course reserves. They are also available in Marx Library and for purchase through the Yale Bookstore.)

### **Introduction**

June 30 Introduction to the Course and Class Discussion of the Movie “Contagion” (Please view prior to class for in-class discussion)

### **I. Epidemics: Case Studies in Global Health (Un)Preparedness**

July 2 Andrew Lakoff’s *Unprepared: Global Health in a Time of Emergency*

July 7 Emily Mendenhall’s *Unmasked: COVID, Community, and the Case of Okoboji*

July 9 Paul Richards’ *Ebola: How a People’s Science Helped End an Epidemic*

July 14 HIV/AIDS—Discussion of the Documentary Film “Bending the Arc” (HIV/AIDS in Haiti, MDR Tuberculosis in Peru) and “Yesterday” (HIV/AIDS in South Africa) (Please view both films prior to class)

### **II. Men, Women, and Children: Case Studies in Conflict, Death, and Survival**

July 16 Vinay Kamat’s *Silent Violence: Global Health, Malaria, and Child Survival in Tanzania*

July 21 Siri Suh’s *Dying to Count: Post-Abortion Care and Global Reproductive Health Politics in Senegal*

July 23 Marcia Inhorn’s *America’s Arab Refugees: Vulnerability and Health on the Margins*

### **III. Global Health Intentions: A Case of White Saviorism?**

July 28 Alexandra Brewis and Amber Wutich, *Lazy, Crazy, and Disgusting: Stigma and the Undoing of Global Health*

July 30 Nicole Berry’s *Good Intentions in Global Health: Medical Missions, Emotion, and Healthcare Across Borders*