

Medical Anthropology Elective

Course coordinators: Adam Gilbertson (DPhil Anthropology) and Nadine Levin (DPhil Anthropology)

Contact: adamlgilbertson@gmail.com or nadine.levin@gtc.ox.ac.uk

Duration of course: 4 weeks, 11 February to 8 March

What is medical anthropology?

Medical anthropology is the study (broadly) of the factors that influence health and well-being in a wide range of cultural and geographic contexts. In particular, medical anthropology focuses on the experience and distribution of illness, examining how people approach the prevention and treatment of sickness. The strength of medical anthropology, however, is that it complements this focus on the subjective aspects of health and disease, it also attempts to situate these personal experiences within wider political, economic, cultural, and historical contexts. Medical anthropologists examine how the health of individuals, societies and environments are interlinked with cultural norms and social institutions, micro and macro politics, and forces of globalization. In this way, medical anthropology can aid in critical understandings of both western and non-western systems of medicine, comparing sociocultural, epidemiological, and biomedical approaches to illness.

For medical practitioners such as yourselves, medical anthropology is particularly useful for understanding diseases, illnesses, or conditions that sometimes evade the logic of western medicine. For example, medical anthropology can help to answer/explore some of these issues:

- Why do people experience chronic pain, and how can it best be treated?
- How are poverty and disease linked, and why do health disparities persist?
- What is the “placebo effect”, and why does it happen?
- Why do people use alternative medicine (such as acupuncture or chinese medicine), and why does it work?
- How can biomedical approaches to reproductive, for example the use of IVF, be improved by attention to social and cultural factors?

Overview and Expectations

This course consists of a combination of lectures and tutorials, as well as informal seminars, interactive classes, and films. At the end of the course, students will give a two-minute poster presentation with their peers in the medical school, on a project which they will have developed throughout the course of the module (primarily in tutorials). This presentation can be based on existing research interests, or on something that the student has learned throughout the course.

Students will be expected to attend all lectures, seminars, classes, films, and tutorials, and to have prepared sufficiently for these events. At the start of the course, students will be expected to have read a few key books and articles, so that they can familiarize themselves with basic concepts in medical anthropology. These will be discussed on the first day of the elective, after which students will meet one-on-one with the instructors to determine what topics might be suitable for a final project.

The **lectures** will be given by key faculty in the anthropology department whose research touches upon medical issues, and students will be given a short reading list based on these lectures, which they are expected to read prior to attending. The **informal seminars** will involve a discussion based around a series of short news articles on current topics in medicine and anthropology, while the **classes** will be a time to reflect on and discuss

the lectures and readings of the week (as a whole). For the **tutorials**, students will prepare a 500 word (1 page single spaced) essay that develops their final project - these needn't be polished, but they should include sufficient reflection on ongoing readings/research.

Reading list

Required reading before the class starts

- Fadiman, A. (1998). *The spirit catches you and you fall down: A hmong child, her american doctors, and the collision of two cultures.*
- Farmer, P. (2001). *Infections and inequalities: The modern plagues.*
- Good, B and Good, MD (1994). *Medicine, rationality and experience.*

General texts

- Lock, M. and N. Vinh-Kim (2010). *An anthropology of biomedicine.*
- Helman, C. G. (2001). *Culture, health and illness.*

Disease/Illness and Medicalization

- Helman, C. G. (1981). "Disease versus illness in general practice": <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1972172/>
- Hahn, R. A. and A. Kleinman (1983). "Biomedical practice and anthropological theory: Frameworks and directions": <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2155650>
- Johanson et al. (2002). "Has the medicalisation of childbirth gone too far?": <http://www.bmj.com/content/324/7342/892?tab=responses>
- Lock, M (1993). "The Politics of Mid-Life and Menopause: Ideologies for the Second Sex in North America and Japan." In *Knowledge, Power and Practice.* Lindenbaum, S. & Lock, M.
- Lock (2001). "The Tempering of Medical Anthropology: Troubling Natural Categories": <http://www.jstor.org/stable/649671>

HIV/AIDS, TB, and structural violence

- Barnett, Tony and Alan Whiteside (2002). *AIDS in the Twenty-First Century: Disease and Globalization.*
- Farmer, P. (2004). "An Anthropology of Structural Violence": <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/382250>
- Goodman (1998). *Building a new biocultural synthesis. Political-economic perspectives on human biology.* (In particular the chapter on Peru)
- Beckmann, Nadine (2010). The commodification of misery: Markets for healing, markets for sickness. In *Health and Healing in Africa: New Arenas and Emerging Markets.* R. Van Dijk and M. Dekker.

Health transitions, globalization, and obesity

- Drewnowski, Adam (2009). "Obesity, diets, and social inequalities": <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1753-4887.2009.00157.x/abstract;jsessionid=A69A45D80D093A36FEABC542D282E64E.d03t03>
- Eaton, S. (1997). "Paleolithic nutrition revisited: A twelve-year retrospective on its nature and implications": <http://www.nature.com/ejcn/journal/v51/n4/abs/1600389a.html>
- McMichael, A. (2000). "The changing global context of public health": <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140673600025642>
- Reuters, "Obesity fight must shift from personal blame": <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/08/us-usa-health-obesity-idUSBRE8470LC20120508>
- Aljazeera, "Who is to blame for the US obesity epidemic?": <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestoryamericas/2012/05/201251072829602369.html>

Treatment Evaluation

- Moerman, Daniel and Jonas Wayne (2002). "Deconstructing the Placebo Effect and Finding the Meaning Response": <http://annals.org/article.aspx?articleid=715182>
- Waldram J.B. (2000): "The Efficacy of Traditional Medicine: Current Theoretical and Methodological Issues": <http://www.jstor.org/stable/649723>
- Radiolab on treatment evaluation: <http://www.radiolab.org/2007/may/17/>
- Wired Magazine, "Placebos Are Getting More Effective. Drugmakers Are Desperate to Know Why": http://www.wired.com/medtech/drugs/magazine/17-09/ff_placebo_effect?currentPage=all

Issues in the Clinic

- Katz, Pearl (1981). "Ritual in the Operating Room": <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3773355>
- Good and Good (1994). "In the subjunctive mode: Epilepsy narratives in Turkey": <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/0277953694901554>
- Nytimes, "Stories in the Service of Making a Better Doctor": http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/24/health/chen10-23.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all
- Good and Good (1993). "'Learning medicine': the constructing of medical knowledge at Harvard Medical School" In *Knowledge, Power, & Practice: Anthropology of Medicine*. S Lindebaum.
- Sinclair (1997). *Making doctors*.

Week 1: 11 - 17 February

Monday, 9-10am: **Introductory Meeting**, 64 Banbury video conference room

Monday, 10-11am: **One-on-one meetings**, 64 Banbury video conference room

Monday, 11-12:30pm: **Medical Anthropology Research Seminar**, 61 Banbury seminar room

Colin Leys, "Winterbourne View and other scandals: the problem of for-profit provision in health care"

Monday, 2-3pm: **Lecture**, 64 Banbury video conference room

Prof Elisabeth Hsu, "Introduction to Medical Anthropology"

Tuesday, 2-3pm: **Lecture**, 64 Banbury video conference room

Dr Caroline Potter, "Ethnographies of Disease"

Wednesday, 11am: **OUAS Coffee Morning**, 64 Banbury common room

Wednesday, 5-6:30pm: *optional: ARGO-EMR seminar, 58a Banbury Pauling Centre*

Thursday, 1-2pm: *optional: UBVO seminar, 61 Banbury seminar room*

Thursday, 2-4pm: **Class**, 43 Banbury seminar room

Nadine Levin and Adam Gilbertson, "Structural violence and biocultural approaches to HIV/AIDS"

Friday: 10-11am: **Tutorial**, 64 Banbury video conference room

Friday, 12-1pm: *optional: Nutritional anthropology lecture, Pitt Rivers Museum lecture theatre*

Week 2: 18 - 24 February

Monday, 11-12:30pm: *optional: Medical Anthropology Research Seminar, 61 Banbury seminar room*

Monday, 2-3pm: **Lecture**, 64 Banbury video conference room

Monday, 3-4:30pm: **Film, "Designer Vaginas"**, 64 Banbury video conference room

Tuesday, 2-3pm: **Lecture**, 64 Banbury video conference room

Dr Morgan Clarke. "Anthropology of global biomedicine"

Wednesday, 11am: *optional: OUAS Coffee Morning, 64 Banbury common room*

Wednesday, 5-6:30pm: *optional: ARGO-EMR seminar, 58a Banbury Pauling Centre*

Thursday, 1-2pm: *optional: UBVO seminar, 61 Banbury seminar room*

Thursday, 2-4pm: **Class**, 43 Banbury seminar room

Nadine Levin and Adam Gilbertson, "Disease/illness in medical anthropology"

Friday: 10-11am: **Tutorial**, 64 Banbury video conference room

Friday, 12-1pm: *optional: Nutritional anthropology lecture, Pitt Rivers Museum lecture theatre*

Week 3: 25 February- 3 March

Monday, 11-12:30pm: *optional: Medical Anthropology Research Seminar, 61 Banbury seminar room*

Monday, 2-3pm: **Lecture**, 64 Banbury video conference room

Prof Stanley Ulijaszek, "Obesity and complexity"

Monday, 3-4:30pm: **Film, "Food INC"**, 64 Banbury video conference room

Tuesday, 2-3pm: **Lecture**, 64 Banbury video conference room

Dr Kaveri Qureshi, "Neoliberalism and health"

Wednesday, 11am: *optional: OUAS Coffee Morning, 64 Banbury common room*

Thursday, 1-2pm: *optional: UBVO seminar, 61 Banbury seminar room*

Thursday, 9-11am: **Class**, room TBC

Nadine Levin, "Health transitions and globalization"

Friday: 10-11am: **Tutorial**, 64 Banbury video conference room

Friday, 12-1pm: *optional: Nutritional anthropology lecture, Pitt Rivers Museum lecture theatre*

Week 4: 4 - 8 March

Monday, 11-12:30pm: *optional: Medical Anthropology Research Seminar, 61 Banbury seminar room*

Monday, 2-3pm: **Lecture**, 64 Banbury video conference room

Prof David Gellner, "Healing and spirit possession in Nepal"

Monday, 3pm: **Field trip, "History of Science Museum"**

Tuesday, 11am: **Mock poster presentations**, 64 Banbury video conference room

Tuesday, 2pm: **Lecture**, 64 Banbury video conference room

Dr Javier Lezaun, "Social organization of R&D"

Wednesday, 11am: *optional: OUAS Coffee Morning, 64 Banbury common room*

Thursday, 3:15-5:15pm: **Poster presentations**