

Princeton University  
Department of Anthropology

## **MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

ANT 335  
219 Aaron Burr Hall  
Tu/Th 1:30-2:50 pm  
Fall 2009

Prof. João Biehl  
128 Aaron Burr Hall  
Phone: 258 6327  
E-Mail: jbiehl@princeton.edu  
Office Hours: Tu 3:15-4:30 PM

### **Teaching Assistants:**

- \* Erin Fitz-Henry (efitz@princeton.edu); office hours: Mo 1:00-2:00 PM (Aaron Burr lounge)
- \* Pablo Landa (planda@princeton.edu); office hours: Th 12:00-1:00 PM (Aaron Burr lounge)

### **Course Description**

Medical Anthropology examines affliction and therapeutics in a cross-cultural perspective. It draws from multiple theoretical approaches to understand the interaction of biology, social environment, and medicine. How do social processes determine disease and health outcomes in individuals and collectivities? What are the role of medical technologies and public interventions in health improvements? How do we account for the economic determinants of health disparities? And how do these disparities affect the work of health professionals?

In the first half of the course, we will discuss the relation of illness, subjectivity, and social experience, the logic of witchcraft, and the healing efficacy of symbols and rituals. We will also probe the reach and relevance of concepts such as the normal and the pathological, body techniques, discipline and normalization, the placebo effect, the mindful body, and the body politic. In the second half of the course, we will explore how scientific knowledge and medical technologies move from the laboratory to public health policy and popular culture, and from professional medicine to the intimate realms of bodily experience (with a focus on mental illness and infectious diseases). How is medical science influenced by economic and political institutions and by patient mobilization? How do patterns of social and economic inclusion and exclusion govern access to therapies?

The course will introduce students to anthropological research methods. We will learn to collect and interpret illness narratives and to study differences in patterns of disease that afflict larger populations in both affluent and resource-poor contexts. The course draws from historical accounts, contemporary ethnographies, medical journals, media reports, and films. We want to build awareness of the competing values and stakeholders in health decision-making (personal and institutional) and bring our insights to bear on debates over emerging forms of life and over the theory and practice of global health. Which forms of governance and ideas of the social good are at stake in the global flows of medical resources and technologies? How do we situate ourselves to study these experimental health regimes?

## Requirements/Grading

The success of the course depends on your commitment to complete all required readings for each class meeting, to critically reflect on the readings, to participate actively in the class discussions, and to creatively integrate these insights in the papers, meant to be an exploratory forum of your own medical anthropological interests.

Grading will be based on:

- Attendance and participation (10 % of the grade).
- A weekly report with comments and questions that arise from class materials. Your report has to be turned in every Thursday, beginning on September 24 and ending on December 10, and should cover the materials assigned for that week. The report should not be more than one page long or have more than 400 words— please, adhere to these limits (15 % of the grade).
- A short paper (8 to 10 double-spaced pages): an analysis of an “illness narrative” based on an interview you conducted with a family member who has experienced some clinical misfortune and/or treatment (biomedical or other). You might also consider analyzing an illness narrative found in first person stories, literature or film. The assignment is due on October 30 at 5 pm (30 % of the grade).
- A short research paper (8 to 10 double-spaced pages) addressing a contemporary disease and health policy OR the development and usage of a new medical technology OR a local health problem through a project sponsored by Princeton’s Community Based Learning Initiative (CBLI). An outline is due on December 1, and the final paper is due on January 12 at 5 pm (35 % of the grade).
- Two class quizzes (October 22 and December 8) (10 % of the grade).

## Course Materials

The following required books will be on reserve at Firestone Library and they can be purchased at the U-Store. Additional articles and book chapters can be downloaded from Blackboard’s electronic reserve.

- Adriana Petryna. *Life Exposed: Biological Citizens After Chernobyl*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Anne Fadiman. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. New York: Noonday Press, 1998.
- Atul Gawande. *Complications: A Surgeon’s Notes on an Imperfect Science*. New York: Picador, 2003.
- Emily Martin. *Bipolar Expeditions: Mania and Depression in American Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- João Biehl. *Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- João Biehl. *Will to Live: AIDS Therapies and the Politics of Survival*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Paul Farmer. *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

## PART I

“A human being lives out not only his personal life as an individual, but also, consciously and subconsciously, the lives of his epoch and contemporaries [...] the damage inflicted by the times on someone’s personal life can have a direct influence on that person’s physical organism.”

—Thomas Mann

“We are not thinking frogs, nor objectifying and registering mechanisms with their innards removed: constantly, we have to give birth to our thoughts out of our pain.”

—Friedrich Nietzsche

### September 17

#### **Introduction**

- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1974. “Preface for the Second Edition.” *The Gay Science*. New York: Vintage Books, pp. 32-38.
- Mann, Thomas. 1995. *The Magic Mountain*. New York: Vintage International, pp. 31-33.
- Film: *The Happy Child* by Mohsen Makhmalbaf (*The Peddler*, Iran)

### September 22

#### **The Normal and the Pathological**

- Benedict, Ruth. 1959. “Anthropology and the Abnormal.” *An Anthropologist at Work: Writings of Ruth Benedict*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, pp. 262-283.
- Foucault, Michel. 1988 [1965]. “Preface.” *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. New York: Vintage Books, pp.ix-xii.
- Kleinman, Arthur and Adriana Petryna. 2002. “Health: Anthropological Aspects.” *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. London: Elsevier Science Ltd, pp. 6495-6499.
- Hahn, Robert A. and Marcia C. Inhorn. 2009. “Introduction.” In *Anthropology and Public Health: Bridging Differences in Culture and Society* (second edition). New York: Oxford University Press, pp.1-31.

### September 24

#### **Illness, Culture, and Medical Authority**

- Fadiman, Anne. 1998. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. New York: Noonday Press.
- Film: *Island of Flowers* by Jorge Furtado (Brazil)

September 29

### **Biomedicine Examined**

- Foucault, Michel. 1980. "The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century." *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977* (edited by Colin Gordon). New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 166-82.
- Foucault, Michel. 1995. "Panopticism." *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Vintage Books, pp.195-202.
- Kleinman, Arthur. 1995. "What is Specific to Biomedicine?" *Writing at the Margin: Discourse between Anthropology and Medicine*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 21-40.
- Good, Byron. 1994. "How Medicine Constructs Its Objects?" *Medicine, Rationality, and Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.65-87.

October 1

### **Illness Narratives**

- Kleinman, Arthur. 1988. *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing & the Human Condition*. New York: Basic Books, pp.3-55.
- Orsi, Robert. "The Cult of the Saints and the Reimagination of the Space and Time of Sickness in Twentieth-Century American Catholicism." In *Religion and Healing in America* edited by Linda L. Barnes and Susan S. Sered. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 29-47.
- Didion, Joan. 2006. *The Year of Magical Thinking*. New York: Alfred Knopf, pp.1-33.
- Film: *Living with Dying* (USA)
- Optional: Good, Mary-Jo DelVecchio and Byron Good. 2000. "Clinical Narratives and the Study of Contemporary Doctor-Patient Relationships." In Gary L. Albrecht, Ray Fitzpatrick and Susan C. Scrimshaw. *The Handbook of Social Studies in Health & Medicine*. London: Sage Publications, pp.243-258.

October 6

### **Body Techniques**

- Mauss, Marcel. 1979. "The Notion of Body Techniques." *Sociology and Psychology: Essays*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 95-119.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy and Margaret Lock. 1987. "The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1 (1): 6-41.
- Ong, Aihwa. 1988. "The Production of Possession: Spirits and the Multinational Corporation in Malaysia." *American Ethnologist*, 15(1):28-42.

October 8  
**Why Me? Why Now?**  
**On Nature, Contingency, and Witchcraft**

- Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 1937. *Witchcraft, Magic and the Oracles among the Azande*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp.21-39, 63-83, 540-544.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1967. "The Sorcerer and His Magic." *Structural Anthropology*. New York: Anchor Books, pp. 167-185.
- Good, Byron. 1994. "Medical Anthropology and the Problem of Belief." *Medicine, Rationality, and Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-24.
- Film: *Sir Edwards Evans Pritchard: Strange Beliefs* (England)
- Optional: Comaroff, John and Jean Comaroff. 1992. "Medicine, Colonialism, and the Black Body." In *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*. Boulder: Westview Press, pp.215-233.

October 13  
**Culture as Pathogen and the Violence of Everyday Life**

- Cannon, Walter Bradford. 1942. "'Voodoo' Death." *American Anthropologist* 44:169-181.
- Mauss, Marcel. 1979. "The physical effect on the individual of the idea of death suggested by the collectivity (Australia, New Zealand)." *Sociology and Psychology: Essays*. London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 35-56.
- Hahn, Robert A. and Arthur Kleinman. 1983. "Belief as Pathogen, Belief as Medicine." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 14 (4): 16-19.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1992. *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. xi-xii, 1-30.
- Film: *The Spirit Possession of Alejandro Mamani* (Bolivia)

October 15  
**Culture as Cure and the Placebo Effect**

- Harrington, Anne. 2000. "Introduction." *The Placebo Effect: an Interdisciplinary Exploration*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp.1-11.
- Spiro, Howard. 2000. "Clinical Reflections on the Placebo Phenomenon." *The Placebo Effect* edited by Anne Harrington, pp. 37-55.
- Moerman, Daniel E. 2000. "Cultural Variations in the Placebo Effect: Ulcers, Anxiety, and Blood Pressure." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 14 (1):51-72.
- Lakoff, Andrew. 2007. "The Right Patients for the Drug: Managing the Placebo Effect in Antidepressant Trials." *BioSocieties* 2(2): 57-71.
- Silberman, Steve. "Placebos Are Getting More Effective. Drugmakers Are Desperate to Know Why." *Wired* 17(9), August 24, 2009.  
[http://www.wired.com/medtech/drugs/magazine/1709/ff\\_placebo\\_effect?currentPage=all](http://www.wired.com/medtech/drugs/magazine/1709/ff_placebo_effect?currentPage=all)
- Eisenberg, D.M., R.B., Davis, S.L. Ettner, S. Appel, S. Wilkey, M. Van Rompay, and R.C. Kessler. 1998. "Trends in Alternative Medicine Use in the United States, 1990-1997: Results of a Follow-up National Survey." *JAMA* 280: 1569-1575.
- Optional: Angell, Marcia. 1998. "Editorial: Alternative Medicine—The Risks of Untested and Unregulated Remedies." *New England Journal of Medicine* 389 (12): 839-841.

October 20

### **Healing and Managing Medical Failure**

- Gawande, Atul. 2003. *Complications: A Surgeon's Notes on an Imperfect Science*. New York: Picador. (Selections).
- Porter, Michael E. and Elizabeth O. Teisberg. 2006. "Introduction" and "Scoping the Problem." In *Redefining Health Care: Creating Value-Based Competition on Results*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, pp. 1-32.

October 22

### **Ex-Human**

- Biehl, João. 2005. *Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment*. Berkeley: University of California Press (Selections).
- **First Quiz**

October 27

### **Literature and Health**

- Biehl, João. 2005. *Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment*. Berkeley: University of California Press (Selections).
- Biehl, João and Amy Moran-Thomas. 2009. "Symptom: Subjectivities, Social Ills, Technologies." In *Annual Review of Anthropology* 38: 267-88.

October 29

### **A Community of Addicted Bodies**

- Bourgois, Philippe and Jeff Schonberg. 2009. "Introduction" and "A Community of Addicted Bodies." *Righteous Dopefiend*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1-23, 78-115.
- Film: *Through the Looking Glass* by Brittany Blockman (Princeton University 2003)

**\*\*\* FALL RECESS \*\*\***

## PART II

“Nature is not a form, but rather the process of establishing relations. Here again man must invent his relation with the other.”

—Gilles Deleuze

“A failure to understand social processes leads to analytic failures, with significant implications for policy and practice.”

—Paul Farmer

### November 10

#### **Scientific Breakthroughs and Foreclosures**

- Fleck, Ludwik. 1979. “How the Modern Concept of Syphilis Originated.” In *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp.1-19.
- Lewontin, Richard. 1992. “A Reasonable Skepticism.” *Biology as Ideology: The Doctrine of DNA*. New York: Harper Perennial, pp. 3-16.
- Proctor, Robert. 1993. “Nazi Medicine and the Politics of Knowledge.” Sandra Harding (ed.). *The Racial Economy of Science: Toward a Democratic Future*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 344-358.
- Whitmarsh, Ian. 2008. “Biomedical Ambivalence: Asthma Diagnosis, the Pharmaceutical, and Other Contradictions in Barbados.” In *American Ethnologist* 35(1): 49-63.
- Film: *Darwin’s Nightmare* by Hubert Sauper (2004)

### November 12

#### **Race, Medicine, and Health Disparities**

- Brandt, Allan. 1978. “Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study,” *Hastings Center Report* 8, pp. 21-29.
- Rouse, Carolyn. 2009. “Introduction” and “Chapter 1.” *Uncertain Suffering: Racial Health Care Disparities and Sickle Cell Disease*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Film: *Deadly Deception* by Denisce DiAnni (NOVA, USA 1993)
- Guest Speaker: Prof. Carolyn Rouse (Princeton University)

November 17

### **Women's Health and the Politics of Reproduction**

- Martin, Emily. 1988. "Premenstrual Syndrome, Work Discipline and Anger." *The Woman in the Body*. Boston: Beacon Press, pp.113-138.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1992. "Two Feet Under." *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 268-339.
- Greenhalgh, Susan. Panel on Women's Rights: The New Population and Birth Planning Law in China Sponsored by the Congressional Executive Commission on China September 23, 2002 <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/roundtables/092302/greenhalgh.php>
- Inhorn, Marcia. 2006. "Making Muslim Babies: IVF and Gamete Donation in Sunni versus Shi'a Islam." *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 30:427-450.
- Film: *Motherland Afghanistan* by Sedika Mojadidi (2006).
- Optional: Inhorn, Marcia. 2006. "Defining Women's Health: A Dozen Messages from More than 150 Ethnographies." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 20(3):345-378.

November 19

### **Psychopharmaceutical Markets/Persons**

- Hacking, Ian. 1999. "Making Up People." *The Science Studies Reader* edited by Mario Biagioli. New York: Routledge, pp. 161-171.
- Martin, Emily. 2007. *Bipolar Expeditions: Mania and Depression in American Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Selections).
- Optional: Film: *Attention Deficit Disorder, a Dubious Diagnosis* (The Merrow Report, PBS); Oldani, Michael. 2004. "Thick Prescriptions: Toward an Interpretation of Pharmaceutical Sales Practices." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 18(3); 325-356.

November 24

### **Biological Citizenship**

- Petryna, Adriana. 2002. *Life Exposed: Biological Citizens After Chernobyl*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Film: *The Age of AIDS* (Part I, Frontline, PBS)
- Guest Speaker: Prof. Adriana Petryna (University of Pennsylvania)

November 26:

### **Thanksgiving Day**



December 1

### **Pathologies of Power and the Doctor Who Would Cure the World**

- Kidder, Tracy. 2000. "The Good Doctor." *The New Yorker*, July 10, pp. 40-57.
- Farmer, Paul. 2004. *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Selections).
- Film: *Partners in Health: Saving Lives in Rural Haiti* (USA)

December 3

### **Structural Violence and the Human Right to Health**

- Farmer, Paul. 2004. *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Selections)
- Farmer, Paul. 2005. "Never Again? Reflections on Human Values and Human rights." *Tanner Lecture Series*. Salt Lake City: Univ. Utah Press.  
<http://www.pih.org/inforesources/news/Farmer-Tanner-Lecture2005.pdf>
- Film: *The Name of the Disease*, by Abhijit Banerjee (MIT 2006)

December 8

### **HIV/AIDS and Universal Treatment Access**

- Biehl, João. 2007. *Will to Live: AIDS Therapies and the Politics of Survival*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Selections).
- Fassin, Didier. 2007. *When Bodies Remember: Experiences and Politics of AIDS in South Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.271-279.
- Film: *The Age of AIDS* (Part II, Frontline, PBS)
- **Second Quiz**

December 10

### **Experimentality—Clinical Trials, Organ Trade, Ethics**

- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 2003. "Rotten Trade: Millennial Capitalism, Human Values and Global Justice in Organs Trafficking." *Journal of Human Rights* 2 (2): 197-226.
- Petryna, Adriana. 2006. "Globalizing Human Subjects Research." In *Global Pharmaceuticals: Ethics, Markets, Practices* edited by A. Petryna, A. Lakoff, and A. Kleinman. Durham: Duke University Press, pp.33-60.
- Rothman, David. "The Shame of Medical Research." *The New York Review of Books*, Nov 30, 2000, pp.60-64.
- Kent, David et al., "Clinical Trials in Sub-Saharan Africa and Established Standards of Care: A Systematic Review of HIV, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Trials." *JAMA* 2004; 292:237-242.
- Film: *Investigative Reports—Organ Trade: Life and Death for Sale* (A&E)  
Optional: Marks, Harry. 1997. *The Progress of Experiment: Science and Therapeutic Reform in the United States, 1900-1990*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.1-14, 17-41, 229-248.

December 15

### **Evidence and Advocacy in Global Health**

- Cohen, Jon. 2006. "The New World of Global Health." *Science*, January 13, 311(5758):162-167.
- Adams, Vincanne, T. Novotny, H. Leslie. 2008. "Global Health Diplomacy" (editorial). *Medical Anthropology* 12(4):315-323.
- Farmer, Paul. 2008. "Challenging Orthodoxies: The Road Ahead for Health and Human Rights." *Health and Human Rights* 10(1):5-19.
- Fassin, Didier. "Humanitarian as a Politics of Life." *Public Culture*, 2007, 19(3):499-520.
- Guest Speaker: Joseph Amon (Health and Human Rights Program, Human Rights Watch)

December 17

### **The Future of Global Medicine**

- Petryna, Adriana. 2009. "The Aftermath of Clinical Trials." In *When Experiments Travel: Clinical Trials and the Global Search for Human Subjects*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 139-185.
- Ecks, Stefan. 2008. "Global Pharmaceutical Markets and Corporate Citizenship: The Case of Novartis' Anti-cancer Drug Glivec." In *BioSocieties* 3:165-181.
- "New Cure for Deadly Visceral Leishmaniasis (Kala-Azar) Approved By Government of India." (Press release, One World Health, September 8, 2006)  
<http://www.oneworldhealth.org/media/details.php?prID=154>
- Film: *A Different Type of Drug Company* by Carl Byker and *The Economics of Health/Poor Peoples Diseases* (BBC)  
[http://www.oneworldhealth.org/media/audio\\_video.php](http://www.oneworldhealth.org/media/audio_video.php)