

ANT 337: Religion, Health, and Healing

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Mascaro

M/W 11:30-12:45

Room 218 Tarbutton

Prof. Mascaro: Room 304 Anthropology, 7-4021, jmascar@emory.edu

Office hours: Thursday 2-4, or by appointment

Course Description:

“Sickness is not just an isolated event, nor an unfortunate brush with nature. It is a form of communication – the language of the organs – through which nature, society, and culture speak simultaneously.” - *Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret M. Lock* in *The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology*

This course will explore the complex relationships between religion, health and healing, topics that are studied across multiple disciplines including anthropology, sociology, medicine, clinical and cognitive psychology, religion and contemplative theory. We will start by examining both religion and healing from a historical and theoretical perspective. Next, we will explore diverse understandings of health and of what makes for a healthy “self”, as well how religious practices and beliefs impact these understandings. We will also investigate how varied religious traditions interpret and assign meaning to illness and suffering and explore how individuals and groups utilize healing systems and religious practices to address matters of disease and affliction. Finally, we will turn to the more recent impact of globalization on the relationship between religion and health to better understand how situated religious beliefs impact global public health and to consider the recent phenomenon of “exporting” religious practices into western biomedical and alternative medicine contexts.

Course Goals and Objectives: Students will develop critical reading and analytical skills important for understanding and reflecting on the topics at hand and for synthesizing diverse ideas and viewpoints.

General advice: ***Read and keep this syllabus.*** It is your permanent guide to the course and your responsibilities. ***This is your contract with us, and by staying here you agree to it.*** This syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations may be necessary in the course of the semester. Changes will be both announced in class and posted on Blackboard. ***It is the responsibility of every student to keep informed and be aware of any such changes.***

Readings: Readings will be posted on Blackboard. Reading assignments are listed in *italics* and are due by the class under which they are listed. In addition to the posted readings, I ask that you purchase three books:

1. Gottlieb, Alma. 2004. *The Afterlife is Where We Come From*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
2. R. Marie Griffith. 2004. *Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in American Christianity*
3. Frankl, Viktor. 1959, 2006. *Man's Search for Meaning*. Boston: Beacon Press

Students with particular needs: Any students with disabilities needing assistance in class may receive classroom accommodations through the Emory Office of Disability Services, or ODS (<http://www.ods.emory.edu/>). To make any accommodations for this course, you must communicate with ODS. To be fair and consistent to everyone, Dr. Mascaro can *only* provide special accommodations if they are sent directly from the ODS.

Late /missed work: Assignments that are handed in past their due date, or quizzes that are missed and need to be made up, will only be accepted if it is accompanied by one of the following:

- 1) A doctor's note verifying an illness that creates an inability to complete the assignment
- 2) A note from an Emory administrative office (such as the Dean's Office) explaining the circumstances that require you to miss or hand in the assignment on time (for example, a death in the family)
- 3) A note from the IT office at Emory explaining specific technological difficulties that *directly* prevented you from passing in an assignment on time (please note that this is not a guarantee of acceptance, as computers are available for student use at the library and elsewhere on campus)
- 4) Prior arrangement with Dr. Mascaro ***at least two class periods in advance***. This pertains to, among other reasons, religious holidays that overlap with class sessions or exams. This arrangement must be confirmed by Dr. Mascaro; sending an email with no follow-up is not sufficient.

Any assignments turned in past their due date without any of the above approved excuses will be accepted for half (50%) credit **up to two days** after the deadline. Any assignments turned in more than two days past their deadline without any of the above approved excuses **will not be accepted**.

*****HONOR CODE REMINDER*****

****An important reminder about the HONOR CODE: *Every student who applies to and is accepted by Emory College, as a condition of acceptance, agrees to abide by the provisions of the Honor Code so long as he or she remains a student at Emory College. By his or her continued attendance at Emory College, a student reaffirms his or her pledge to adhere to the provisions of the Honor Code.***

Please note: Any appearance of cheating in this class will result in a referral to the Honor Council. Please remember that conviction on an Honor Code violation carries the possible penalty of a notation on the student's Personal Performance Record, meaning that the student will not be accepted to medical, and other professional, schools.

Grading:

1. Attendance, discussion questions, and participation (15%)
2. Discussion leading (15%)
3. 6 Quizzes (5 best scores will count) (50%)
4. Final paper (20%)

Particulars:

1. **Discussion questions and attendance (15%):** To help you prepare for discussion, students will post 1 discussion question or (thoughtful) comment based on each assigned reading ***by midnight the night before class***. Attendance and contribution are mandatory. If you attend every class but rarely or never contribute to class discussions, you will receive 13 of 15 possible points.
2. **Discussion leading (15%):** Each student will facilitate the discussion of reading assignments, in consultation with the instructor. Discussion leaders will draw on their own reading of the assignment as well as on the discussion questions posted by their classmates (see Blackboard for specific instructions). Total number of presentations will depend on final class enrollment, but it is likely that each student will do 2 presentations during the semester. Sign-up will take place during the second week of classes.
3. **6 Quizzes (50%):** There will be a quiz at the end of each major section of the class. Quizzes will generally include short answer and short essay questions that involve reflection and synthesis of that section topic. Your best 5 quiz scores will be counted. If you miss a quiz (unexcused), that missed quiz will count as your dropped score.
4. **Final paper (20%):** Your final paper will be due on the day and time of the final exam: Monday, May 4th at 8:00. You will submit a proposal and outline on April 20th that will account for 5% of your paper grade. More details on the topic will be provided on the blackboard site and during class.

Schedule:

Section 1: Introduction: Anthropology at the interface of religion and health

Wed 1/14: Class introduction: what to expect this semester and what will be expected of you

Wed 1/21: Defining terms, orienting traditions

- Geertz, Clifford "Religion as a Cultural System"
- Saler, Benson. "Conceptualizing religion: Some recent reflections." *Religion* 38.3 (2008): 219-225.
- Presentation sign-up

Mon 1/26: Defining terms, orienting traditions

- Arthur Kleinman's "Illness Narratives" [chs. 1 and 2 posted on BB]
- Sjaak van der Geest "Medical Anthropology." *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Health, Illness, Behavior, and Society* (2014).

Wed 1/28: Biomedicine under the lens

- ~~○ Womack's "The Anthropology of Health and Healing" [ch. 9 posted on BB]~~
- Lock and Nguyen's "An Anthropology of Biomedicine" [chs. 2 and 3 posted on BB]

Mon 2/2:

- Glick, Leonard B. "Medicine as an ethnographic category: the gimi of the New Guinea highlands." *Ethnology* (1967): 31-56.
- ❖ Quiz #1

Section 2: Conceptions of health: what makes a healthy body?

Wed 2/4: What is a healthy child?

- Alma Gottlieb's "The Afterlife is Where We Come From based on infant mortality in Cote d'Ivoire" [chs. 3-5]

Mon 2/9: What is a healthy child?

- Alma Gottlieb's "The Afterlife is Where We Come From based on infant mortality in Cote d'Ivoire" [chs. 9-11]

Wed 2/11: Human suffering and what is a good death?

- Sogyal Rinpoche's "The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying" [chs. 1-3 posted on BB]
- Paul D. Simmons' "Faith and Health" [chs. 1 and 4 posted on BB]
- <http://webusers.astro.umn.edu/~larry/CLASS/NOTHING/READINGS/sdarticle.pdf> or [A Social History of Dying by Allan Kellehear](#)
- ⊖

Mon 2/16:

❖ **Quiz #2**

Wed 2/18: Guest lecture: Tenzin Namdul

Section 3: Health as morality

Mon 2/23:

- Ruth Marie Griffith's "Born again bodies: flesh and spirit in American Christianity" [~~Intro,~~ ch 1, 2]

Wed 2/25:

- Ruth Marie Griffith's "Born again bodies: flesh and spirit in American Christianity" [ch. 3 and 4]

Mon 3/2:

- Ruth Marie Griffith's "Born again bodies: flesh and spirit in American Christianity" [ch 5]

❖ **Quiz #3**

Section 4: Embodiment: On Mind Body Connections

Wed 3/4:

- Harold Koenig's "Medicine Religion and Health" [ch. 3 posted on BB]
- Lewis, Sara E. "Trauma and the Making of Flexible Minds in the Tibetan Exile Community." *Ethos* 41.3 (2013): 313-336.
- Luhrmann, Tanya Marie. "Making God real and making God good: Some mechanisms through which prayer may contribute to healing." *Transcultural psychiatry* (2013)

Spring break 3/8 – 3/13

Mon 3/16:

- Viktor Frankl's "Man's Search for Meaning" [first half]

Wed 3/18:

- Viktor Frankl's "Man's Search for Meaning" [second half]

Mon 3/23:

- Robert Lemelson's films: "Ritual burdens" (25 min.), "Kites and Monsters" (25 min)

Wed 3/25:

- Film discussion

❖ **Quiz #4**

Section 5: Meet the healers:

Mon 3/30:

- Wiley and Allen's "Medical Anthropology: A biocultural approach" [ch.3 posted on BB]
- Arthur Kleinman's "Illness Narratives" [ch. 14 posted on BB].
- Robert Lemelson's film: "Jathilan: Trance and Possession in Java"

Wed 4/1:

- Film discussion
- Mari Womack's "The Anthropology of Health and Healing" [ch. 11 posted on BB]
- Peter Brown and Ron Barrett's "Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology" [chs. 15 and 16 posted on BB]

Mon 4/6: Guest lecture: Tawni Tidwell

- Terry Clifford's "Tibetan Buddhist Medicine and Psychiatry" [chs. 1, 2 and 4 on BB]

Wed 4/8:

❖ Quiz #5

Section 6: Globalization and the transport of health practices across cultures:

Mon 4/13:

- Boston Globe series, "Exporting faith," October 8-11, 2006. [Parts 1-4]

Wed 4/15:

- Goyal, Madhav, et al. "Meditation programs for psychological stress and well-being: a systematic review and meta-analysis." *JAMA internal medicine* 174.3 (2014): 357-368.
- Rubin, Jacob. 2014. "Meditation for Strivers." *The New Yorker* (<http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/meditation-for-strivers>)
- McMahan's "The Making of Buddhist Modernism" [ch. 7 posted on BB]

Mon 4/20:

- Video: Doing Time, Doing Vipassana
- Video: <http://aeon.co/video/society/meditation-in-prison-may-be-a-path-to-freedom/>
- ❖ **Paper proposal and outline due**

Wed 4/22:

- Rocha, Tomas. 2014. "The Dark Knight of the Soul." *The Atlantic* (<http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/06/the-dark-knight-of-the-souls/372766/>) or on BB

Mon 4/27: Wrap-up

❖ Quiz #6

*****Monday, May 4th 8:00: FINAL PAPER DUE *****