

**HEALTH, HEALING AND ETHICS:  
CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON SICKNESS AND SOCIETY**

**ANTH 3301/SOCI 3301  
Core course for Health and Society Major  
MayTerm 2017  
10 am-12 pm and 1-3 pm  
Location: TBD**

**Professor Nia Parson**

E-mail: [nparson@smu.edu](mailto:nparson@smu.edu)

Office Hours: By appointment

Office: 405 Heroy Hall

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Throughout this course, we will engage with key theoretical frameworks, research and analyses in medical anthropology to examine the multiple forces that interrelate with health situations and the ways people think about and act upon their own health and illness. We will examine health and ethics in cross-cultural, global perspective. This will include a focus on some of the complicated political, economic, cultural and social forces that shape individuals' and groups' illness, sickness and disease experiences, beliefs, and outcomes. Special attention is paid to the ethics of access to quality treatments and care. We will also analyze how science creates its objects of study and is shaped by and shapes people's worldviews and lived realities. We will examine ethical issues involved in these processes. Specific topics include the cultural construction and organization of medical systems; situated meanings of health, disease, sickness and illness; gender, class, race/ethnicity and health disparities.

**PROFESSOR BIOGRAPHY**

Professor Parson, a full-time faculty member in the Department of Anthropology has taught this course multiple times, and students have reviewed the course highly. She is a medical anthropologist who has conducted research and published on intimate partner violence in Chile, where she lived for two years, and among Latin American immigrants in Dallas and New Jersey. She authored the book, *Traumatic States: Gendered Violence, Suffering and Care in Chile*, as well as a number of journal articles and book chapters in edited volumes. She is currently working with a colleague to research mental illness and health among people of Spanish-speaking descent in Dallas. You will have the opportunity to engage with her in discussions of her firsthand experience with anthropological knowledge production and specifically medical anthropology.

**SOME KEY BENEFITS OF TAKING THIS CLASS**

- Fulfills Pillar/Proficiencies
- You will have the opportunity to discuss and debate crucial current issues in a small and dynamic seminar setting, not often possible in a regular semester course.
- Understand your own health, illness and health care choices in new ways.
- Explore what it means to live a moral life in various contexts.
- Learn about ethical issues in medical research, health technologies such as IVF and surrogacy, as well as various healing modalities throughout the world.
- Examine what role morality and ethics play in health care policy, access to health care and how people understand the choices they make about their own health.
- Core course for Health and Society Majors!

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

#### **What Really Matters: Living a Moral Life amidst Uncertainty and Danger.**

Kleinman, Arthur

2007

Oxford: Oxford University Press.

#### **A Death Retold: Jesica Santillan, the Bungled Transplant and Paradoxes of Medical Citizenship**

Keith Wailoo, et al

2006

ISBN 10: 0-8078-5773-4

### **TAGS AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

#### **PILLARS**

##### **Philosophical/Religious/Ethical Inquiry**

2. Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on or apply the theoretical methods of, one of the fields of philosophy, religious studies, or ethics via a focus on a specific area or set of issues. (Level 2)

##### **Individuals, Institutions, and Cultures**

3. Students will be able to analyze different theoretical or interpretive perspectives in the study of individual, social, cultural, political, or economic experiences. (Level 2)

4. Students will be able to evaluate critically the research outcomes and theoretical applications in the study of individual, social, cultural, political, or economic experiences. (Level 2)

#### **PROFICIENCY: Human Diversity**

With respect to issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, or societies in the developing world, students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the historical, cultural, social, or political conditions of identity formation and function in human society, including the ways in which these conditions influence individual or group status, treatment, or accomplishments.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Critical Reflection Papers (40%)**

You will write in-class response papers each day at the beginning of class. Here, you will have the chance to thoughtfully reflect on the material for the day. This will help you prepare to actively discuss the materials with your classmates and Dr. Parson.

#### **Class Participation (30%)**

**Regular contributions to the conversation in class are required** because this is not a lecture course. I am running the class as a seminar, where your discussion of the issues raised in the readings is crucial. **If you have trouble speaking up in class**, please discuss this directly with Dr. Parson, either during office hours or after class. Attendance is crucial and **more than 1 3-hour period of unexcused absence could result in a failing grade for the course.**

- Sustained, engaged classroom participation.
- 2 students per day will present a summary of key points in that day's readings. They will provide at least 3 questions to foment class discussion for that day. Make sure that these questions are provocative and provide room for discussion and debate about key themes in the reading.
- You will sign up for 2 separate days to bring in news articles related to themes of the course. Please be prepared to tell the class about the article and how it relates to our course materials.

#### **Health and Healing in Local Moral Worlds Project Overview and Requirements**

In this project you will interview a family member or friend who 1) has experienced a health problem, 2) underwent treatment (biomedical and/or other) related to this health problem, and 3) faced a moral dilemma or ethical issue related to the problem. You will draw from core course concepts to analyze these experiences.

You may also interview a caregiver (a relative, nurse or doctor) or analyze a first person account of a health problem as found in an autobiography or film/documentary.

This is an *opportunity* for you to explore critical and creative ways of interpreting the relations between bodies, words, medical practices and local moral worlds.

You will put together a 15-minute presentation to present on the last day of the course, which **conveys** the patient's or caregiver's **story** (or filmic or written account) and respectfully **interpret** it. When interpreting, make sure to bring in some of the key analytical concepts we have discussed in the course.

### **Book/Film Account**

Please notice that if you choose to analyze a first person account in book or film you will also have to consider broader questions such as: Where and when did this work appear? Why at this particular time? How does this account relate to medical views and technologies of the time? Who is the intended audience? Which values does the account convey? What literary or artistic genres are deployed and with what effects on the reader?

### **INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS (15%)**

You need to turn in your notes and/or interview transcriptions. Make sure to include where the interview was done and your reflections on how it went. Also note any moments that were difficult or particularly enlightening.

Please, *do not interview anyone who is still seriously compromised* (physically or emotionally) by the illness or event. No children, pregnant women, or people undergoing mental health treatment shall be interviewed.

An informal and open-ended conversational format is always best since it allows more room for the people whom you are interviewing to engage on their own terms and based within their own frames of understanding. Explain the goals of the project to the person you are talking with and answer any question she or he might have. Inform the person that participation in this conversation is voluntary, that confidentiality will be strictly maintained, that at any moment the person may discontinue her/his participation in the conversation and that you will make your account available to her/him.

Protect the person's anonymity in your notes, transcriptions and final narrative (unless the person allows you to reveal her/his identity).

*Listen carefully* and take notes during the conversation or tape record the conversation if the person consents. You will need to transcribe the interview and/or write up your field notes as soon as possible following the interview. Try to capture the mood of speech, the use of key metaphors, particular idioms. Register not just data and facts but thoughts, emotions, reactions, ethical reflections (yours as well as those of your informant).

**PRESENTATION 15%** You will present your project to the class on the final day of class. You will have approximately 15-minutes to present.

This presentation is the culmination of what you have learned this semester, so make sure to show that you have understood and can work with various of the important concepts of the course. This project is designed for you to have the opportunity to apply some of what you are learning about anthropological perspectives on health, ethics and moralities to a specific experience with a moral problem that emerges within a setting where diagnosis, health, illness and treatments are engaged.

You must:

- meaningfully analyze the interview you conducted or the autobiographical film or book you examined.
- demonstrate a good grasp of the concept of a local moral world and bring anthropological analytics to bear on the source material you have. Construct a thesis
- frame your argument with core concepts from the course
- include explicit References to Course Material: Cite specific points made in at least 4 of the texts we've read, and work with them to understand the interview(s) you have conducted.
- Include implicit References to Course Material: Make sure to show us, through your presentation of the illness narrative and your subtle use of core course themes/concepts, that you grasp and can mobilize these key concepts/frameworks.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

**MAY 18**

### **FUNDAMENTALS OF CROSS-CULTURAL APPROACHES TO HEALTH, ILLNESS AND HEALING**

"Medical Anthropology: An Introduction to the Fields" BROWN pp. 3-6

"Conceptual Tools: Ethnomedicine and Healers" BROWN pp. 101-102

FILM *Second Opinion with T. R. Reid: Inside Ayurvedic Medicine*, 2008, 54 minutes

"Lives: Talk Therapy: In an Indian Hospital, Taking the Healing Power of Words to its Limit" NYT Magazine, by Katherine Russell Rich, 6-28-09

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/28/magazine/28lives-t.html>

Film: *Making of a Doctor*

**MAY 19**

### **APPROACHES TO HEALTH ETHICS**

Taylor, Janelle “Confronting ‘Culture’ in Medicine’s ‘Culture of no Culture’” (CANVAS)

Kleinman and Benson, Anthropology in the Clinic (CANVAS)

Fink, Sheri. August 30, 2009. Strained by Katrina, a Hospital Faced Deadly Choices. *The New York Times Magazine*.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/30/magazine/30doctors.html>

Beauchamp, T. L. and James Childress. 2001. “Ch. 1 Moral Norms”

In-class film: *Unnatural Causes*

## **MAY 22**

### **RACISM AND SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION**

FILM: *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, 2003      IDD 05326

Brandt, Allan. 1978. “Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study” *Hastings Center Report* 8(6): 21-29

## **MAY 23**

### **RACISM AND SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION**

Beauchamp, T. L. and James Childress. 2001. “Ch. 2 Moral Virtues” in *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*. 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Oxford University Press. (Key concepts: Five Focal Virtues, Common Morality, Principles Approach to Bioethics)

Henrietta Lacks materials

## **MAY 24**

### **MEDICINE AND MARKETS**

Lakoff, Andrew The Right Patient for the Drug (CANVAS)

Harris, John. 2001. “Introduction: The Scope and Importance of Bioethics” in John Harris, ed. *Bioethics*. Oxford University Press.

Singer, Natasha August 4, 2009 “Medical Papers by Ghostwriters Pushed Therapy” *The New York Times*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/05/health/research/05ghost.html>

Carey, Benedict. “Bipolar illness soars as a diagnosis for the young” *The New York Times*, Sept. 4, 2007

Harris, Gardiner and Benedict Carey “Researchers Fail to Reveal Full Drug Pay” *The New York Times*, June 8, 2008, Front Page

Film: *Health for Sale*

FILM: *The Medicated Child* (Frontline Special, January 2008)

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)

**MAY 25**

**RESEARCH AND TRANSPLANT ETHICS**

DUE: WHOM ARE YOU INTERVIEWING?

Wailoo, Livingston, Guarnaccia. 2006. Introduction **WLG**

Luis Jimenez Case <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/28/us/28deport.html>

“Even the Elite Hospitals aren’t Immune to Errors” *The New York Times* February 23, 2003

Gawande, Atul 2007 “A Life-Saving Checklist” *The New York Times*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/30/opinion/30gawande.html>

**MAY 26**

**RESEARCH AND TRANSPLANT ETHICS**

Sharp, Lesley 2006 “Babes and Baboons: Jessica Santillan and Experimental Pediatric Transplant Research in America” **WLG**

Rouse, Carolyn. 2006. “Jessica Speaks?: Adolescent Consent for Transplantation and Ethical Uncertainty” **WLG**

**MAY 30**

**WHO IS “DESERVING” OF CARE?**

Farmer, Paul, et al Structural Violence (CANVAS)

Chavez, Leo 2006 “Imagining the Nation, Imagining Donor Recipients” **WLG**

*Doctor Hotspot* with Atul Gawande, PBS Frontline

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/doctor-hotspot/>

FILM: *The Age of AIDS, Part II*

**MAY 31**

**WHO IS “DESERVING” OF CARE?**

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy 2006. “Post-Human Ethics, Global (In)justice, and the Transplant Trade in Organs” **WLG**

*Rough Cut: India: A Pound of Flesh Selling Kidneys to Survive* by Samantha Grant, 2006

[http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/watch/player.html?pkg=flw\\_rc&seg=32&mod=0](http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/watch/player.html?pkg=flw_rc&seg=32&mod=0)

Kleinman Ch. 5-6

## **JUNE 1**

### **ETHICS OF NEW REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES**

Roberts, Abandonment and Accumulation (CANVAS)

FILM: *Making Babies*

## **JUNE 2**

Final wrap-up

Student Presentations

FINAL PAPER DUE

### **COURSE POLICIES**

**Disability Accommodations:** Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Ms. Rebecca Marin, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities (214-768-4557) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements. (See University Policy No. 2.4.)

**Religious Observance:** Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)

**Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities:** Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalogue)

### **THE CONSTITUTION OF THE HONOR COUNCIL OF SMU**

**PREAMBLE AND DEFINITIONS** We, the students of Southern Methodist University, with the approval of the Provost and the Dean of Student Life, establish the Honor Council to uphold the standards of academic integrity set forth in the Honor Code. Acts punishable under the code include, but are not limited to the following:



**ACADEMIC SABOTAGE** Intentionally taking any action which negatively affects the academic work of another student.

**CHEATING** Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.

**FABRICATION** Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

**FACILITATING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY** Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of the Honor Code.

**PLAGIARISM** Intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.

**The general principles for all honest writing can be summarized briefly.**

**Acknowledge indebtedness:**

1. Whenever you quote another person's actual words.
2. Whenever you use another person's idea, opinion, or theory, even if it is completely paraphrased in your own words.
3. Whenever you borrow facts, statistics, or other illustrative material - unless the information is common knowledge.

**Plagiarism** also encompasses the notions of citing quotations and materials from secondary sources that were not directly consulted in the preparation of the student's work, and copying the organizational and argumentation structure of a work without acknowledging its author.

\*Please note: Syllabus is subject to change.