Department of Anthropology and Sociology (ANSO)
Academic year 2019-2020

Medical Anthropology II: Contemporary Approaches to Biomedicine, Technology and Global Health
ANSO111- Spring - 6 ECTS

Schedule & Room

Course Description
The course covers key biomedical and biotechnological developments in the late 20th and early 21st century to examine how new biomedical technologies and advances in biomedicine are problematizing old global health concerns. The course illustrates ways in which new technological advances are impacting categories such as life/death, health/illness and normal/pathological. The topics covered include emerging global complexities in defining health, illness, medical surveillance, epidemics, and the rise of new pharmaceuticals in the context of emerging biotechnologies. The course also examines the very idea of death, dying, and availability of organs for transplantation around the globe and introduces biologically, ethically, and socially complex stem cell technologies. The course shows how these seemingly elite medical and technological developments are reframing global health concerns in the new century.

Syllabus

Grading
Assessment for the course is based:

35% Class presentation

65% Final written assignment of 4000-4500 words, this word count includes footnotes/endnotes but excludes bibliography.

Guidance on writing the assignment is provided on page two.

Attendance and participation in the weekly sessions will also factor in the final course assessment.
The assignment must be submitted by **Friday, 05 June 2020.**

**Guidelines on writing the assignment**

Students are encouraged to write on a topic of their choosing. This should be discussed in advance with the course convener. You are encouraged to make a brief class presentation on the chosen topic.

**Please note** that references underneath are recommended readings. However, this is not an exhaustive list and further materials will be suggested in class. You are also encouraged to undertake topic specific searches in the library catalogue and e-journals such as: *Social Science and Medicine, Sociology of Health and Illness, Medical Anthropology, Medical Anthropology Quarterly, Biosocieties.*

The written assignment should include all of the following elements:

1. **Formulation of a topic or problem.**
2. **Explanation of how the topic is linked to a broader problem, relevant to the problem.**
3. **Breakdown of the problem/topic in sub-problems/parts.**
4. **Analytical review of the appropriate literature showing how others have approached this problem. Review literature along the lines/dimensions you have identified in #3.**
5. **Comment/state position on each subpart of your analytical review.**
6. **Conclusion: summarize findings and state their importance/consequences. How does your analysis contribute to understanding the issue at stake? Which future research directions do they point at? Try and formulate and state your own theoretical argument/position in the conclusion.**

Your written assignment will be marked according to the following criteria:

1. **Relevance:** The relevance of the question chosen and the extent to which the assignment addresses the question set
2. **Material Used:** The substance of the assignment, that is, the selection and use of relevant material gained from a variety of sources. Evidence of reading as well as empirical facts and illustrations.
3. **Argument:** The extent to which the assignment sets out a clearly structured discussion and analysis of the issues raised. Evidence of clear and independent thinking (i.e., signs that you can weigh up evidence, think through and assess arguments for yourself).
4. **Scholarship:** Basic literacy, fluency and quality of presentation as well as scholarly attribution of references and use of notes.

***

1. **Monday, 17 February 2020:**
   ➢10:15am to 12:00pm (S7) ANSO111 |

   **Course Introduction and Overview**

2. **Monday, 24 February 2020:**
   ➢10:15am to 12:00pm (S7) ANSO111 |

   **Biomedicine and Healthy Life**
   The notion of “healthy life” has become established in many guises cross-culturally. However, mid-twentieth century biomedicine conjoined the idea of health and life to mean something
rather specific. This session discusses some of these complexities and asks what does it mean to live a healthy life under biomedical dispensation around the globe?

Suggested Readings:


3. Monday, 02 March 2020:
➢10:15am to 12:00pm (S7) ANSO111 |

New Horizon of Normality and Pathology
The story of medicine is predicated on certain key demarcations that sought to separate the normal and the pathological as well as healthy and ill as antithetical states in need of active management. This session will focus on how the idea of lapsing into a state of pathology or illness and the restoration of a normative state of health and normality became central to biomedicalised approach to health. In so doing the session will track how this strict separation fundamentally assumes health to be a normative constant in a globalised world.

Suggested Readings:

Life of/on Pharmaceuticals:
The emergence of pharmaceuticals turned the pursuit of health and wellbeing into an ingestible feat. The lecture shows how the political anatomy of ‘pharmaceuticalisation’ is suffused with consuming publics seen as inherently ill and in need of chronic treatment.

Suggested Readings:

Instrumental and Surgical Vivisections
The biomedical view of the body can be defined as “operable”. This session highlights how dissection as a pedagogical moment to surgical interventions and laboratory-based speciation came to be predicated on a hermetically sealed view of biomedicine as both discipline and practice. The session explores how this view impacts a fundamentally uneven global landscape of biomedicine.

Suggested Readings:

6. **Monday, 23 March 2020:**

➢10:15am to 12:00pm (S7 ANSO111)

**Trials and Tribulations of Human Guinea Pigs**
How do human beings turn into clinical trial subjects? The lecture explores the politics and economics of turning vulnerable human guinea pigs into autonomous and exposed experimental subjects. In so doing we examine how the modality of ethically and biomedically adjudicated experimentation on human subjects has diffused globally as gold standard good medical practice.

**Suggested Readings:**


7. **Monday, 30 March 2020:**

➢10:15am to 12:00pm (S7 ANSO111)

**Incommunicable Life of (Non)Communicable Diseases**

The distinction between communicable and non-communicable diseases has emerged as both problematic and unsustainable. This session examines how non-communicable and communicable diseases: (a) emerge and converge (b) challenge global health and local policy planning (c) become contagious maladies.

**Suggested Readings:**


8. **Monday, 06 April 2020:**
   ➢10:15am to 12:00pm (S7) ANSO111 |

**Pandemic Epidemic and Global Contagion**
This session interrogates how speculation, preparation and surveillance produce the spectre of an impending global catastrophe. The lecture shows how threat perceptions in the absence of tangible epidemics turn preparedness into a permanent and reoccurring project. In the final analysis the session explores how the lingering ‘fear’ of an impending pandemic has become a distinctly modern cautionary epidemic.

**Suggested Readings:**


***

**Monday, 13 April 2020: No Class. Easter Break 10th April to 19th April**

***

9. **Monday, 20 April 2020:**
   ➢10:15am to 12:00pm (S7) ANSO111 |

**Class Presentations**
Global Epigenetics and the Malleable Molecular

The global spread of epigenetics – changes to gene expression that arise both developmentally but also in mature adults either randomly or under the influence of the environment – has redefined the contours of nature/nurture debates. The lecture examines how this malleable and shape-shifting potential rescripts global health concerns.

Suggested readings:

Unequal Lives, Unequal Health

Social inequalities gestate illnesses and incubate diseases. The lecture shows how social exclusion, entrenched prejudice and structural violence renders lives and health unequal. Intersection of gender, race, class and geographic (dis) locations are explored to show how public and global health prescriptions need to refocus on fundamental questions of equity, justice, and access.

Suggested Readings:

12. Monday, 11 May 2020:
➢10:15am to 12:00pm (S7) ANSO111 |

Medical Travel and the Making of “New” Global Health
This session seeks to reimagine the global travel for medical treatments, often euphemised as medical tourism, as a “new” form of “global health.” The lecture explores this provocation to show how medical migrants, therapeutic refugees and remedial tourists produce a truly global form of health seeking that is difficult to localize. In so doing the session contends that health in this global mode can only be comprehended as fluid and in motion.

Suggested Readings:
7. Sarah Hartmann (2018) Mobilising patients towards transnational healthcare markets – insights into the mobilising work of medical travel facilitators in Delhi, Mobilities, DOI: 10.1080/17450101.2018.1533694

13. Monday, 18 May 2020:
➢10:15am to 12:00pm (S7) ANSO111 |

Imbrication of Life and Death
Biomedicine and medical biotechnologies have radically readjusted the meaning of life and death. From living on life support to assisted end of life through to seemingly opposing ends of the life course – birth and death – emerge curiously conjoined as the process of conceiving and supporting life increasingly becomes “pregnant with death”. Drawing on cross-cultural examples the session will discuss how life and death paradoxically reinstate each other in a (bio)technologically and (bio)medically unequal world.
Suggested Readings:


14. Monday, 25 May 2020:
➢10:15am to 12:00pm (S7) ANSO111 | 

Class Presentations