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CHTH 414.00: Health and Culture - A Global Perspective

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CHTH 414: Health and Culture: A Global Perspective Fall 2022

Instructor Information

Instructor: Professor Gilbert Quintero

Email: gilbert.quintero@umontana.edu (Please include CHTH 414 in the subject line of any correspondence related to this class).

Student meeting hours: Please feel free to schedule a time to meet with me.

Course Description

This course focuses on various cultural, social, and behavioral aspects of local community health projects in the context of global health. This includes examination of a variety of different cultural conceptions, popular health cultures, health-related behaviors, and social representations. The first part of the course examines perceptions of health and well-being, ethnophysiology, and disease etiology and introduces the ethnographic research process as a tool for generating cultural knowledge and understandings of health. The second part of the course consists of an analysis of extensive ethnographic case studies of community health in local settings in the areas of obesity, diabetes, and HIV/AIDS. Finally, the course concludes by considering the nature and impact of climate change in community and global contexts as well as a cultural assessment of some of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course the student will be able to:

- Understand cultural, social and behavioral aspects of community health initiatives in local and global contexts;
- Understand the relevance and application of a cross-cultural perspective when working in a community health and/or global health setting;
- Critically apply cultural understandings to analyze health issues;
- Express ideas and thoughts verbally and in writing in a scholarly, professional manner.

Course Format

This course is delivered in a face-to-face format. Class sessions will typically include pertinent announcements and housekeeping, brief introductions to topical areas, lectures, and summary and discussion of the assigned readings. Class may also include review and discussion of relevant videos. Please note that this course is co-convened with a graduate level course (CHTH 515). Students in the

MPH program enrolled for that course section have the option of attending the class remotely via Zoom. These Zoom class sessions may be recorded.

Course Requirements

Grades will be calculated according to student performance in the following areas:

Attendance	10%	
Active participation	10%	
Exams (best 2 out of 3)	60%	(9/29, 10/27, 12/15)
Book review	20%	(Due 12/9)

Plus/minus grades will be assigned for this course at the instructor's discretion. Final cumulative grades will be based upon the percentages for each of the requirements outlined above.

Attendance: Except for exams, two excused absences are allowed for any reason – no questions asked. In addition, students experiencing cough/flu-like symptoms should **not** come to class and will be granted excused absence. Email the instructor to inform him if this is your situation.

Active participation: Each student should read the materials assigned for each particular class period and be prepared to respond to instructor queries. These questions will generally include attention to the following:

- What questions or issues do the authors examine?
- What key terms or concepts are discussed?
- What theories, frameworks, and methods are utilized?
- What evidence do the authors provide to support their arguments? Did you find this argument and support convincing? Why or why not?
- What themes or issues do these readings address that have been covered in other class materials? How are these texts similar or different?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the reading?
- What did you particularly agree/disagree with? What did you find to be the most interesting aspect of the reading? What terms, concepts, or explanations are unclear to you?

Making a few notes to yourself on the readings before class will be helpful.

Exams: There will be three exams based on course readings and discussions. A portion of the overall course grade will be based upon the best scores from two out of three exams. This means that if you are satisfied with the scores on the first two exams the last exam is optional. Because you can drop one grade, there will generally be no make-up exams. The only exceptions to this are those situations that fall under university policy which states that a make-up will be allowed in circumstances where a student can provide documentation that they are missing a scheduled exam because of their participation in a university sponsored activity, which includes field trips, ASUM service, music or drama performances, and intercollegiate athletic events. Individuals missing an exam because of military service or mandatory public service (e.g., jury duty) may also request a make-up. Any student requiring a make-up must notify the instructor by email no less than a week before the scheduled exam and must

provide official documentation regarding the reason for the absence. If a make-up exam is approved it must be completed within one week of the original exam.

Book review: For this assignment, you are required to write a critical book review and analysis of at least two of the full-length health ethnographies we will examine this semester. The main body of the review must be approximately 3000 words in length. More details and guidance regarding this assignment are forthcoming.

Policies

Accommodations: University policy states that it is the responsibility of students with documented disabilities to contact instructors during the first week of the semester to discuss appropriate accommodations to ensure equity in grading, classroom experiences, and assignments. Please notify the instructor via email. He will work with the student and the staff of the Office for Disability Equity (ODE) to make accommodations. Contact ODE for more information.

Email: Conduct any class related email communications with me through your UM account. Also, be sure to put "CHTH 414" in the subject line of any email you send to me regarding this class.

Code of Conduct: All students are expected to act in accordance with the Student Conduct Code (available through the UM webpage).

Electronic devices: Cell phones should be turned off and out of sight for the duration of class. Laptops should be used with course goals and discussion and learning dynamics in mind.

Moodle

A web-based site for this class is available on Moodle: <http://umonline.umt.edu/>.

Technical support is provided at: <http://umonline.umt.edu/studentssupport/default.php>.

Required Texts

- Kenworthy, N., 2017. *Mistreated: The Political Consequences of the Fight against AIDS in Lesotho*. Vanderbilt University Press.
- Mendenhall, E., 2019. *Rethinking Diabetes: Entanglements with Trauma, Poverty, and HIV*. Cornell University Press.
- Nichter, M., 2008. *Global Health: Why Cultural Perceptions, Social Representations, and Biopolitics Matter*. Tucson: University of Arizona.
- Yates-Doerr, E., 2015. *The Weight of Obesity: Hunger and Global Health in Postwar Guatemala*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Other assigned materials including journal articles and videos, as detailed in class.

Recommended Text

- Skolnik, Richard, 2016. Global Health 101, (3rd Edition). Jones and Bartlett Learning.

Course Schedule

Part 1 – The Intersection of Health and Culture

Week 1, What is Health and What Does Culture Have to Do with It?

Topics:

1. Understanding and contending with personal and popular perceptions, experiences and practices of health in cultural context
2. Cultural aspects of health risk perceptions

Readings:

1. Balshem, Cancer, control, and causality
2. Barsky, The paradox of health
3. Crawford, A cultural account of “health”
4. Goodman, et al., What is “community health”?

Week 2, Using Ethnography as a Window onto Health and Culture

Topics:

1. Conceptualizing and understanding culture
2. Ethnography and the anthropological paradigm

Readings:

1. Biehl & Petryna, Critical global health
2. Davison, et al., Lay epidemiology and the prevention paradox
3. D’Houtaud & Field, The image of health
4. Farmer, An anthropology of structural violence
5. Izquierdo, When “health” is not enough
6. Lupton & Chapman, “A healthy lifestyle might be the death of you”
7. Singer & Erickson, Global health and the Anthropological paradigm

Part 2 – Cultural Perceptions, Social Representations and Biopolitics

Week 3, Popular Health Culture

Topics:

1. Ethnophysiology: Culture, health and the body

2. Culture and theories of illness etiology and local illness categories
3. Cultural perceptions or pharmaceuticals and quality of care

Readings: Nichter, Global Health

1. Introduction
2. Chapters 1-4

Week 4, The Rhetoric of Global Health

Topics:

1. Representations and health development policy
2. Representations of health and social formations
3. NGOs: Issues and agendas

Readings: Nichter, Global Health

1. Chapters 5-7

Week 5, Review, Exam

Exam 1 (9/29)

Part 3 – Ethnographic Case Studies

Week 6, Hunger and Global Health in Guatemala

Topics:

1. Disease, modernity and nutrition

Readings: Yates-Doerr, The Weight of Obesity

Week 7, Community Capacity and HIV Prevention

Topics:

1. HIV/AIDS in a global and local context

Readings: Kenworthy, Mistreated

Week 8, Syndemic Case Studies: Diabetes in Global Context

Topics:

1. Syndemics

2. Social and cultural dimensions of diabetes

Readings: Mendenhall, Rethinking Diabetes

Week 9, Catch-Up and Review, Exam

Exam 2 (10/27)

Week 10, Building and Changing a Culture of Health

Topics:

1. Health as social practice
2. Culture of health
3. Culture and epidemiology
4. Quantifying health
5. Future research

Readings:

1. Crawford, Health as a meaningful social practice
2. Mason, et al., How do you build a “Culture of Health”?
3. Mason, Epidemiologizing culture
4. Lupton, Quantifying the body
5. Schudson & Baykurt, How does a culture of health change?

Week 11, To Be Announced

Topics and readings to be announced.

Election Day, Tuesday, 11/8 (no class)

Part 4 – Health and Culture in an Age of Climate Change and Pandemics

Week 12, Climate Change, Culture and Health, Part I

Topics:

1. The Anthropocene
2. Human population health, socio-cultural evolution and social-ecological systems
3. Introduction to planetary health

Readings:

1. McMichael, Population health in the Anthropocene
2. Steffen, et al., The Anthropocene: conceptual and historical perspectives
3. Zywert, Human health and social-ecological systems change

4. Horton, et al., From public to planetary health
5. Myers, Planetary health

Week 13, Climate Change, Culture and Health, Part II

Topics:

1. Planetary health: Responding to health challenges in a changing environment

Readings:

1. Watts, et al., The 2020 report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change

Thanksgiving, Thursday, 11/24 (no class)

Week 14, Cultural Assessments of the COVID Pandemic

Topics:

1. The political culture of public health responses
2. Community responses and conspiracy theories
4. Mental models

Readings:

1. Kenworthy, et al., On symbols and scripts
2. Koon, et al., A spectrum of disbelief
3. Romer & Jamieson, Conspiracy theories as barriers to controlling the spread of COVID-19
4. Westermeyer, Freedom over fear
5. Greenhalgh, Miasmas, mental models and preventive public health

Part 5 – Health and Culture: A Future Research and Practice Agenda

Week 15, Moving Toward the Next Generation of Research and Practice in Global Health

Readings:

1. Nichter, Chapter 8
2. Farmer, Making Public Health Matter

Case review due on December 9th.

Week 16, **Exam 3** (Thursday 12/15 10:10am)

Note: Please complete reading assignments before the first class meeting of the week indicated. This syllabus provides a general plan. Changes to the reading assignments and the general course schedule may be necessary and will be announced in class.