

Department of Anthropology

ANTH 2290B-650- Cultures of Health, Illness, Disability and Healing

COURSE OUTLINE

Winter 2024

Version date: September 21, 2023

Instructor and Course Information:

Dr. Pamela Block

Email: pblock@uwo.ca

Tutorials: Wednesdays 11-11:30. These will be recorded and posted on OWL each week.

This course will be conducted online. It is *asynchronous*, meaning that students will be provided with a variety of lesson materials and activities that can be done throughout the week, although there may be tasks that must be completed by specific times.

Credit Value: 0.5 credit

Antirequisites: the former 2290F/G.

Prerequisites: None.

Course Description:

The goal of this course is to introduce you to medical anthropology, the role that anthropologists play in helping us understand global beliefs about illness and disability. We will learn about how anthropologists influence and work with systems of health, healing, wellness for policy, research, and activism. The course will include an emphasis on how health, illness, disability and healing are understood globally and cross-culturally, and will examine the relationship between biological, social and cultural understandings of these concepts.

Weekly schedule of activities

Week	Date	Details
Week 1A	Jan 8-10	Orientation: An Introduction to the Course (2.5% of grade)
Week 1B	January 11-14	Read pp. 1-35: 1-2.3
Week 2	Jan 15 - 21	Read pp 36-71: 2.4-3.4 – Material Culture Topic Due Jan 21
Week 3	Jan 22 - 28	Read pp 72-115: 4-5.3
Week 4	Jan 29 – Feb 4	Read pp. 115-155: 6-7.3 Group Assignment Topics Due Feb 4
Week 5	Feb 5 - 11	Read pp. 155-192: 7.4-9.1 Material Culture Assignment Due Feb 11
Week 6	Feb 12 - 16	Read pp. 193-235: 9.2-10.4

Week	Date	Details
		Weeks 1-5 Weekly Discussion Posts, Lesson Questions, and Journals Due Feb 16
Reading Week	Feb 17 - 25	READING Week
Week 7	Feb 26 – Mar 4	Read pp. 236-273: 11-12.2
Week 8	Mar 5 – 11	March 7, 11:59pm Last day to Drop Add Read pp. 274-307: 12.3-13.4
Week 9	Mar 12 – 18	Read pp. 308-344: 14-15.1 Group Assignments Due March 18
Week 10	Mar 19 - 25	Read pp. 345-382: 15.2-16 Weeks 6-10 Weekly Discussion Posts, Lesson Questions, and Journals Due March 25
Week 11	Mar 26 – April 1	Group Assignment Showcase.
Week 12	April 2 - 8	Group Assignment Showcase Continues. Peer Reviews due April 3, 11:59pm.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the historically-contingent social, cultural, political and economic influences on the interpretation, treatment and management of health, illness, disability and healing
- Identify the relationship between broad level social forces and their influence on individual biography and the lived experience health, illness, disability and healing
- Recognize that ethnographic fieldwork can reveal the limitations of standard biomedical understandings and practices relevant to health, illness, disability and healing.
- Apply emerging understandings of health, illness, disability and healing to the COVID pandemic.

Course Materials:

The textbook for this course is *The Routledge Handbook of Medical Anthropology*. By Lenore Manderson, Elizabeth Cartwright, Anita Hardon (first edition 2018). An electronic version of this book is available for free through the library or for sale via the bookstore. Supplemental readings will be included in weekly lessons in OWL.

Registered students will be able to access additional course readings through the course site in OWL before the first day of class.

Evaluation:

[Small Group Discussions on OWL 20%](#)

Each week from weeks 2-11 you will discuss the readings and OWL lessons with your discussion group. Each of these weeks you are expected to make four posts as specified in the [instructions making Four \(4\) posts per week worth .5 points per post or 2 points per week.](#)

[Lesson Questions 10%](#)

You are expected to fully engage in all lessons on OWL and complete all exercises. These include a mixture of items including weekly readings, video, comments, questions to answer, surveys etc. that should take 60-90 minutes and will be documented through your answering the multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank or matching questions embedded in each lesson. You are allowed to skip one week at no penalty to receive full credit. After that you will lose 1% per week for questions uncompleted.

[Journals 20%](#)

Students will keep a text journal (must be typed) reflecting on the course readings and activities. Journals should be formatted as single pdf or doc. They must be readable by Turnitin to receive a grade. Journals will be submitted in two parts at weeks 6 and 12. If you wish to receive feedback on your journal – indicate it in the assignments tab and in bold at the top of the document.

Use the journal to respond to the Journal Prompts present in each lesson. You can reflect on your learning journey, evaluate your assignments, and participation in the all the elements of the course. It can also be a place for private reflections that you do not want to share in public discussions. If you want to include images and poems, links and quotes, you may do so, but be sure to use quote marks on quotes and reference the author or the assignments portal might flag you for plagiarism.

[Material Culture Assignment 20%](#)

Choose an item of relevance to the course topic of health, illness, disability, and healing. It can be a charm, a recipe, a song, an assistive technology, something used in your family (or a fictional family if you prefer) that relates to the course topic of health, illness disability and healing. Describe the item, draw it or include photos and create a poster discussing of the item's history and relevance to the course and to your/your family's using at least three citations from the textbook (different chapters and sections of chapters are written by different people and can count as a separate citation). You may include additional citations from other scholarly sources if you wish. Text in the poster may not exceed the 750 word limit. See due date in the OWL Assignments tab. If you want written feedback be sure to submit by the due date and note this in Bold at the top of the first page.

[Group Assignment: Create a Lesson 20%](#)

Discussion groups will create one or more Lessons using a communication modalities of your choice (video, painting and artist statement, poster, slide presentation, graphic narrative etc.) on a topic of your choosing that you feel should have been covered in the course but wasn't. Video/audio submissions must include a transcript. See due date in the OWL Assignments tab.

Note: Examples of possible formats may be to: select a cross-cutting theme and compare different readings approach to it; select an historical event and analyze it using course readings. You may discuss what you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches used in the readings. You are expected to provide evidence for all your assertions using the texts assigned or in supplemental materials. Use your DQs and RWEs from your journals to explore possible topics. If you want written feedback, be sure to submit by the due date and note this in Bold at the top of the first page.

Group Assignment Showcase and Peer Reviews (10%)

In week 12 Groups will share the Lessons they created through OWL Forums and give peer feedback to other Groups' Lessons. Group members will respond to questions and feedback received.

Academic Statements and Policies:

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current [Academic Rights and Responsibilities](#) policies in the Academic Calendar. Such items include accommodations for students with disabilities, religious holidays, consideration for medical illness, academic appeals, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and code of student conduct.

Course Specific Conditions Required to Pass this Course

There are no course specific conditions required to pass this course. **The evaluation methods described in this course outline are essential requirements for the course.**

Grading Policy

All posted grades are final. Students are encouraged to read assignments and rubrics carefully consult with the TAs or instructor well before the due date to ensure full understanding of what is expected. Students may also meet after receiving grades in order to get additional feedback and suggestions for future assignments. However, we will not regrade assignments for this course.

Learning Community

Just like there are many learning styles there are also many teaching styles. Some courses are structured with information flowing primarily from the instructor to the student and then flowing back from the student to the instructor, perhaps mediated by teaching assistants. This is effective for lower levels of knowledge acquisition: remembering and understanding. This is not how I am teaching this course. For higher levels of knowledge acquisition: applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating, we will establish what is called a learning community. Knowledge in a learning community circulates, flowing between all participants through online and small group discussions. The instructor assumes a mentoring role rather than as sole authority and there is recognition of different sorts of knowledge available in the classroom, especially when learners come from many disciplines and backgrounds. Research shows students reach higher levels of understanding when they are actively engaged in the learning process in this way. [Here is a site with some more information.](#) As well as [this PDF article.](#)

This style may not work for everyone, indeed may make even some people uncomfortable. I invite you to review our syllabus carefully and consider if you are prepared for this level of engagement. Your active weekly participation and engagement in this course through direct communication with

other students during small group discussions (using text, audio or video) and via a group project is essential to your success here.

Collective Access

In this course we are all “in it” together. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that everyone has access to information and needed supports to be successful this course. This may mean describing images, making sure videos are captioned, taking notes collectively, etc. Collective access needs vary from course to course, so I will let you know of any specific access guidelines that we need for this course. This site discusses some examples of [collective access](#). I would suggest briefly describing any photos you post and make sure any videos you post (including ones you personally make) are captioned. Auto-Captioning is very easy to do on [Zoom](#) and [YouTube](#). If you have access needs or concerns feel free to contact me, and I will be happy to meet to discuss how to best support your success in this course.

Accommodation, Illness Reporting and Academic Considerations

You may pursue academic consideration for deadlines as documented in the [University’s Academic Consideration policy](#). However, if you are in communication with Dr. Block before the extended submission windows close, usually she will grant extensions without your needing to go through a formal process. Note that for final assignments at the end of term this may not be possible.

Accessible Education

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. More information can be found on the [Accessible Education site](#), as well as the accommodation policy in the [Academic Calendar](#).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Statement on Plagiarism and Use of AI:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author or AI, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing or disclosure. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. **Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.** See link below for more details on the penalties for plagiarism. All assignments will be evaluated using TurnItIn in the Assignments portal (video/audio submissions must include a transcript). **All assignments are required to have a TurnItIn score below 15%. Assignments with higher than a 15% score will be returned ungraded.**

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