

Culture and Health Sample (Subject to Changes)

Instructor Xiao Mei
Credits 3
Total credit hours 42
Language of Instruction English

1.Course Description

This course examines health and illness from a cultural perspective. Specifically, we will analyze the social meanings associated with health and illness, medical knowledge production, medical decision-making, and global health in cross-cultural contexts. The students will have a chance to delve into issues related with the social processes of framing illness, the medicalization of life, the complexity and uncertainty surrounding medical decisions, and the cultural aspects of health practices across the globe.

2.Course Objectives

- 1) To help students understand human health, disease and (un)wellbeing from the perspective that these realities are determined, influenced and shaped by the multifaceted and complex contexts in which we live our lives
 - 2) To provide students with basic conceptual tools to analyze structural issues as well as everyday encounters such as the dynamics of the patient-doctor relationship, the power of the pharmaceutical industry, the crises of care, etc.
- To inspire an appreciation of the significant and complex role played by culture in issues related to health and illnesses around the globe

3.Course Schedule

Week 1

Introduction to the course

Theme I: Social Meanings of Health and Illness

Week 2

Topic: Social Constructions of Illness

Readings:

Brown, P.J. and Ron Barrett, 2009, Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.[Ablon, *Nature of Stigma*; Hunt, *Strategic Suffering* ; Murphy, *The Damaged Self*]

Week 3

Topic: Framing Illness

Readings:

Brown, Phil., 2008, "Naming and Framing: The Social Construction of Diagnosis and Illness." In *Perspectives in Medical Sociology*, 4th ed., edited by P. Brown. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.[pp. 82 and 86-103]

Taylor, Rosemary C.R., 2013, "The Politics of Securing Borders and the Identities of Disease." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 35 (2): 241-54.

Week 4

Topic: Deconstructing "Normality" "Health" "Medicine" and "Illness"

Readings:

Lock, Margaret, 2000, "Accounting for Disease and Distress: Morals of the Normal and Abnormal." In *Handbook of Social Studies in Health and Medicine*. London: Sage Publications.

Kleinman, Arthur, 1988, "Chapter 1: The Meaning of Symptoms and Disorders". In *The Illness Narratives*. New York: Basic Books.

Theme II: Production of Medical Knowledge

Week 5

Topic: Medicalization (I)

Readings:

Conrad, Peter, 2005, "The Shifting Engines of Medicalization." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 46: 3-14.

Rose, N., 2007, "Beyond Medicalisation." *The Lancet* 369:700-702.

Week 6

Topic: Medicalization (II)

Readings:

Lock, Margaret and Vinh-Kim Nguyen, 2010, *An Anthropology of Biomedicine*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. ["How normal became Possible", "When normal does not exist." "Problems with assessing normal", "Pathologising the normal"]

Garro, Linda, and Cheryl Mattingly, 2000, "Narrative as Construct and Construction". In *Narrative and the Cultural Construction of Illness and Healing*. C. Mattingly and L. Garro, eds. Berkeley:University of California Press.

Week 7

Topic: The Medical-Industrial Complex and the Politics of "Big Pharma"

Readings:

Fugh-Berman, Adriane, and Shahram Ahari, 2007, "Following the Script: How Drug Reps Make Friends and Influence Doctors." *PLoS Medicine* 4: 621-25.

Dumit, Joseph, 2012, *Drugs for Life: How Pharmaceutical Companies Define Our Health*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.[Chapter 2: "Pharmaceutical Witnessing and Direct-to-Consumer Advertising"]

Week 8

Topic: Learning Medicine

Readings:

Good, Byron J. and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, 1993, " 'Learning Medicine': The Constructing of Medical Knowledge at Harvard Medical School." In *Knowledge, Power, and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press

Davenport, Beverly Ann, 2000, "Witnessing and the Medical Gaze: How Medical Students Learn to See at a Free Clinic for the Homeless." *Med Anthropol Q.* 14(3): 310-327.

Week 9&10 Student Presentations on Interview Projects

Theme III: Medical Decision-making

Week 11

Topic: Patients and Professionals: The Politics of Authority

Readings:

Timmermans, Stefan, 2020, "The Engaged Patient: Changes in Patient-Doctor Communication." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 61 (3): 259-73.

Reich, Jennifer A., 2016, *Calling the Shots: Why Parents Reject Vaccines*. New York: New York University Press.[Chapter 2: "Parents as Experts"]

Week 12

Topic: Diagnostic Disclosure and Truth-telling

Readings:

Beste, J., 2005, "Instilling Hope and Respecting Patient Autonomy: Reconciling Apparently Conflicting Duties." *Bioeth* 3: 215-231.

Jutel, A., 2016, "Truth and Lies: Disclosure and The Power Of Diagnosis." *Soc. Sci. Med.* 165: 92-98.

Theme IV: Global Health in Cross-Cultural Contexts

Week 13

Topic: The Value of "Culture" in Global Health Practice

Readings:

Nichter, Mark, 2008, *Global Health: Why Cultural Perceptions, Social Representations, and Biopolitics Matter*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press. [Introduction and Chapter 1]

Hunt, Linda, 2000, "Strategic Suffering: Illness Narratives as Social Empowerment among Mexican Cancer Patients." In *Narrative and the Cultural Construction of Illness and Healing*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Week 14

Topic: Care around the Globe

Readings:

Weitz, Rose, 2019, *The Sociology of Health, Illness, and Health Care: A Critical Approach*, 8th Ed. Boston: Cengage. (Chapter 9: "Health Care Around the Globe")

Kleiman, Arthur, 2019, *The Soul of Care: The Moral Education of a Husband and a Doctor*. New York: Random House.

Week 15

Topic: The Problem of Health Disparities

Readings:

Lavizzo-Mourey, Risa J., Richard E. Besser, and David R. Williams, 2021, "Understanding and Mitigating Health Inequities—Past, Current, and Future Directions." *New England Journal of Medicine* 384 (6 May): 1681-84.

Week 16

Review and Q&A

Week 17&18

Exam weeks

4. Grading & Evaluation

- 1) Attendance and participation in discussions (20%)
- 2) An in-depth interview about an illness experience, which results in a 5-page report and an in-class presentation (30%)
- 3) A final paper (50%)

5. Readings

- 1) Kleinman, Arthur, 1988, *The Illness Narratives*. New York: Basic Book. ISBN: 9780465032020
- 2) Michael Winkelman, 2009, *Culture and Health: Applying Medical Anthropology*. New York: Jossey-bass. ISBN: 9780470283554
- 3) Cockerham, W. C. (Ed.). (2009). *The New Blackwell Companion to Medical Sociology*. John Wiley & Sons. ISBN: 9781405188685

Course Director's Academic Background:

Dr. Xiao MEI (meixiao@fudan.edu.cn) is an Associate Professor based at the Department of Sociology at Fudan University. She received training in sociology from Carleton University, Canada, London School of Economics and Political Sciences, and University of Cambridge, UK. Her research interest is in cultural sociology, health and illnesses, and emotional labor. Her book *Chongqing's Red Culture Campaign: Simulation and Its Social Implications* was published by Routledge in 2018. Her work also appeared in *Social Science & Medicine*, *China Perspectives*, *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, *Chinese Journal of Sociology* (《社会》), *Youth Studies* (《青年研究》), and other academic journals.