

## Department of Anthropology and Sociology (ANSO)

Academic year 2020-2021

## 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.

### > PROFESSOR

[Aditya Bharadwaj](#)

[Office hours](#)

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### > ASSISTANT

[Dalia Zein](#)

[Office hours](#)

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## 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, 04 June 2021**.

### **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 or the teaching assistant. 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.

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1. **Wednesday, 24 February 2021:**  
> 4:15pm to 6:00pm (S2) ANSO111 |

### **Course Introduction and Overview**

2. **Wednesday, 03 March 2021:**  
> 4:15pm to 6:00pm (S2) 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:**

1. Adams, V. 2016. *Metrics: What Counts in Global Health*. Durham: Duke University Press.
2. Biehl, J and Petryna, A. 2013. *When People Come First: Critical Studies in Global Health*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
3. Biehl, J. 2007. A Life: Between Psychiatric Drugs and Social Abandonment. In Biehl, J; Good, B and Kleinman, A. (eds.). *Subjectivity: Ethnographic Investigations*. Berkeley: University of California Press
4. Clarke, A.E.; Mamo, L.; Fosket, J.R.; Fishman, J.R. and Shim, J.K. 2010. *Biomedicalization: Technoscience, Health, and Illness in the US*. Durham: Duke University Press. Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 7 and Epilogue.
5. Farmer, P. 2004. An Anthropology of Structural Violence. *Current Anthropology* 45: 305–326.
6. Inhorn, M.C. and Wentzell, E.A. 2012. *Medical Anthropology at the Intersections: Histories, Activisms, and Futures*. Durham: Duke University Press. Introduction, Chapter 3, Chapter 4.
7. Kleinman, A. 1997. *Writing at the Margin: Discourse between Anthropology and Medicine*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
8. Geissler, P.W (ed.). 2015. *Para-States and Medical Science: Making African Global Health*. Duke University Press. Introduction.

### **3. Wednesday, 10 March 2021:**

> 4:15pm to 6:00pm (S2) 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:**

1. Canguilhem, G. 1989. *The Normal and the Pathological*. New York: Zone Books.
2. Das, V. 2015. *Affliction: Health, Disease, Poverty*. New York: Fordham University Press. Introduction, Chapter 7.
3. Farmer, P. 2005. *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights and the New War on the Poor*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
4. Fassin, D. and D'Halluin, E. The Truth from the Body: Medical Certificates as Ultimate Evidence for Asylum Seekers. *American Anthropologist* 107(4):597–608.
5. Keating, P and Cambrosio, A. 2003. *Biomedical Platforms: Realigning the Normal and the Pathological in Late Twentieth Century Medicine*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
6. Lock, M. 2012. The Epigenome and Nature/Nurture Reunification: A Challenge for Anthropology. *Medical Anthropology* 32(4): 291-308
7. Manderson, L and Smith-Morris, C. 2010. *Chronic Conditions, Fluid States: Chronicity and The Anthropology of Illness*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
8. Ticktin, M. 2011. *Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Introduction, Chapter 6.



#### 4. Wednesday, 17 March 2021:

> 4:15 pm to 6:00pm (S2) ANSO111 |

##### **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:**

1. Oldani, M. 2004. "Thick Prescriptions: Toward an Interpretation of Pharmaceutical Sales Practices." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 18(3); 325-356.
2. Petryna, A, Lakoff, A and Kleinman, A. 2006. *Global Pharmaceuticals: Ethics, Markets, Practices* edited by Durham: Duke University Press.
3. Ecks, Stefan M.  
2013 *Eating Drugs: Psychopharmaceutical Pluralism in India*. NYU Press.
4. Dumit, J. *Drugs for Life: How Pharmaceutical Companies Define Our health*. Durham: Duke University Press.
5. Sunder Rajan, K. 2017. *Pharmocracy: Value, Politics, and Knowledge in Global Biomedicine*. Duke University Press
6. Martin E. 2006. The pharmaceutical person. *BioSocieties* 1(2):273–87
7. Biehl J. 2007. Pharmaceuticalization: AIDS treatment and global health politics. *Anthropol. Q.* 80(4):1083–126
8. Banerjee D. 2016. Markets and molecules: a pharmaceutical primer from the south. *Med. Anthropol.* 13:1–18.

#### 5. Wednesday, 24 March 2021:

> 4:15 pm to 6:00pm (S2) ANSO111 |

##### **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:**

1. Collins, H.M. 1994. Dissecting Surgery: Forms of Life Depersonalised. *Social Studies of Science* 24:311-33.
2. Davenport, B.A. 2000. Witnessing and the Medical Gaze: How Medical Students Learn to see at a Free Clinic for the Homeless. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 14(3): 310-327.
3. Foucault, M. 2003. *Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
4. Good, B.J. 1994. *Medicine, Rationality, and Experience: An Anthropological Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
5. Prentice, R. 2013. *Bodies in Formation: An Ethnography of Anatomy and Surgery Education*. Durham: Duke University Press.
6. Gawande, A. 2003. *Complications: A Surgeon's Notes on an Imperfect Science*. New York: Picador.
7. Prentice, R. 2013. *Bodies in Formation: An Ethnography of Anatomy and Surgery Education*. Durham: Duke University Press.

8. Johnson, E., 2007. Surgical simulators and simulated surgeons: Reconstituting medical practice and practitioners in simulations. *Social Studies of Science*, 37(4), pp.585-608.

**6. Wednesday, 31 March 2021:**

> 4:15 pm to 6:00pm (S2) 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:**

1. Bharadwaj, A. 2013. Experimental Subjectification: The Pursuit of Human Embryonic Stem Cells in India. *Ethnos* 79:1, pp. 84–107.
2. Carl Elliott, 2008. “ Guinea-Pigging: Healthy Human Subjects for Drug-Safety Trials are in Demand: But is it a Living?” *The New Yorker*, January. Pp. 36-41.
3. Abadie, R. 2010. *The Professional Guinea Pig: Big Pharma and the Risky World of Human Subjects*. Duke University Press
4. Petryna, A. 2009. *When Experiments Travel: Clinical Trials and the Global Search for Human Subjects*. Princeton University Press.
5. Anita Hardon & Robert Pool (2016) Anthropologists in Global Health Experiments, *Medical Anthropology*, 35(5):447-451.
6. Adams, V., Miller, S., Craig, S. and Varner, M., 2005. The challenge of cross-cultural clinical trials research: case report from the Tibetan Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 19(3), pp.267-289.
7. Fisher, J.A., 2007. Coming soon to a physician near you: Medical neoliberalism and pharmaceutical clinical trials. *Harvard health policy review: a student publication of the Harvard Interfaculty Initiative in Health Policy*, 8(1), p.61.
8. Sariola, S and Simpson, B. 2011. Theorising the ‘human subject’ in biomedical research: International clinical trials and bioethics discourses in contemporary Sri Lanka. *Social Science and Medicine*, 73(4):515-521.

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**Wednesday, 07 April 2021: No Class. Easter Break Friday 02 April to Sunday 11 April**

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**7. Wednesday, 14 April 2021:**

> 4:15 pm to 6:00pm (S2) 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:**

1. Nichter, M., 2008. *Global health: Why cultural perceptions, social representations, and biopolitics matter*. University of Arizona Press.
2. Landecker, Hannah. 2011. *Food as Exposure: Nutritional Epigenetics and the New Metabolism*. *BioSocieties* 6 (2): 167–194.
3. Wald, P. 2008. *Contagious: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative*. Duke University Press
4. Greer, S.L. 2012. The Politics of Communicable Disease Control in Europe. Special Issue *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, 37(6).
5. Luby, S.P., 2013. The cultural anthropological contribution to communicable disease epidemiology. In *When Culture Impacts Health* (pp. 43-52).
6. Mendenhall, E., Kohrt, B.A., Norris, S.A., Ndeti, D. and Prabhakaran, D., 2017. Non-communicable disease syndemics: poverty, depression, and diabetes among low-income populations. *The Lancet*, 389(10072), pp.951-963.
7. Setel, P.W., 2003. Non-communicable diseases, political economy, and culture in Africa: anthropological applications in an emerging pandemic. *Ethnicity & disease*, 13(2 Suppl 2), pp.S149-57.
8. Seeberg, J. and Meinert, L., 2015. Can epidemics be noncommunicable? Reflections on the spread of 'noncommunicable' diseases. *Issues*, 5, p.2.

#### 8. Wednesday, 21 April 2021:

> 4:15 pm to 6:00pm (S2) 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:**

1. Farmer, P. 2001 *Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues*. University of California Press.
2. Mckiernan-Gonzalez, J. 2012. *Fevered Measures: Public Health and Race at the Texas-Mexico Border, 1848–1942*. Duke University Press.
3. Atlani-Duault, L. and Kendall, C., 2009. Influenza, anthropology, and global uncertainties. *Medical anthropology*, 28(3), pp.207-211.
4. Charles L. Briggs & Mark Nichter (2009) Biocommunicability and the Biopolitics of Pandemic Threats, *Medical Anthropology*, 28(3):189-198.
5. Singer, M., 2009. Pathogens gone wild? medical anthropology and the "swine flu" pandemic. *Medical anthropology*, 28(3), pp.199-206.
6. Caduff, C., 2015. *The pandemic perhaps: dramatic events in a public culture of danger*. Univ of California Press.
7. Caduff, C., 2010. Public prophylaxis: Pandemic influenza, pharmaceutical prevention and participatory governance. *BioSocieties*, 5(2), pp.199-218.
8. Lynteris, C., 2016. The epidemiologist as culture hero: Visualizing humanity in the age of "the next pandemic". *Visual Anthropology*, 29(1), pp.36-53.

#### 9. Wednesday, 28 April 2021:

> 4:15 pm to 6:00pm (S2) ANSO111 |

##### **Class Presentations**

## 10. Wednesday, 05 May, 2021:

> 4:15 pm to 6:00pm (S2) ANSO111 |

### 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:

1. Pentecost M. (2018) *The First Thousand Days: Epigenetics in the Age of Global Health*. In: Meloni M., Cromby J., Fitzgerald D., Lloyd S. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Biology and Society*. Palgrave Macmillan, London
2. Thayer, Z.M. and Non, A.L., 2015. Anthropology meets epigenetics: Current and future directions. *American Anthropologist*, 117(4), pp.722-735
3. Niewöhner, J., 2011. Epigenetics: Embedded bodies and the molecularisation of biography and milieu. *BioSocieties*, 6(3), pp.279-298.
4. Lock, M., 2013. The epigenome and nature/nurture reunification: a challenge for anthropology. *Medical Anthropology*, 32(4), pp.291-308.
5. Squier, S.M. 2017. *Epigenetic Landscapes: Drawings as Metaphor*. Duke University Press.
6. Landecker, H. and Panofsky, A., 2013. From social structure to gene regulation, and back: A critical introduction to environmental epigenetics for sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 39, pp.333-357.
7. Pickersgill, M., Niewöhner, J., Müller, R., Martin, P. and Cunningham-Burley, S., 2013. Mapping the new molecular landscape: social dimensions of epigenetics. *New Genetics and Society*, 32(4), pp.429-447.
8. Mulligan, C.J., 2016. Early environments, stress, and the epigenetics of human health. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 45, pp.233-249.

## 11. Wednesday, 12 May 2021:

> 4:15 pm to 6:00pm (S2) ANSO111 |

### 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:

1. Biehl, João and Adriana Petryna. 2013. Critical Global Health. *In When People Come First*. Pp 1-22.
2. Farmer, Paul. 2009. On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below. *Race/Ethnicity. Multidisciplinary Global Contexts*. 3(1)11-28.
3. Farmer, Paul. 2001 *Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues*. University of California Press.
4. Krieger, Nancy. 2011. The Science and Epidemiology of Racism and Health: Racial/Ethnic Categories, Biological Expressions of Racism, and the Embodiment of Inequality—an Ecosocial Perspective. Chapter 11. *In, What's the use of race?: Modern governance and the biology of difference*. Ian Whitmarsh and David Shumway Jones, Eds.



5. Krieger, Nancy. 2003. Genders, sexes, and health: what are the connections—and why does it matter? *International Journal of Epidemiology*. 32:652-657.
6. Brandt, A. 1978. "Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study," *Hastings Center Report* 8, pp. 21-29.
7. Rouse, Carolyn. 2009. "Introduction" and "Chapter 1." *Uncertain Suffering: Racial Health Care Disparities and Sickle Cell Disease*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
8. Garcia, J. J-L and Sharif, M. Z. 2015. Black Lives Matter: A Commentary on Racism and Public Health. *American Journal of Public Health* 105(8): e27 - e30.

## 12. Wednesday, 19 May 2021:

> 4:15pm to 6:00pm (S2) 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:

1. McDonald, E., 2011. Transnationalism: Bodies-in-Motion: Experiences of Momentum in Transnational Surgery. *A Companion to the Anthropology of the Body and Embodiment*, pp.481-503.
2. Sobó, E.J., 2009. Medical travel: what it means, why it matters. *Medical anthropology*, 28(4), pp.326-335.
3. Solomon, H., 2011. Affective journeys: the emotional structuring of medical tourism in India. *Anthropology and Medicine*, 18(1), pp.105-118.
4. Dalstrom, M., 2013. Medical travel facilitators: connecting patients and providers in a globalized world. *Anthropology & medicine*, 20(1), pp.24-35
5. Ong, A. 2016. *Fungible Life: Experiment in the Asian City of Life*. Duke University Press. Chapter 2
6. Wilson, A. (2011). Foreign Bodies and National Scales: Medical Tourism in Thailand. *Body & Society*, 17(2–3), 121–137.
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](https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2018.1533694)
8. Michal Rachel Nahman, M. R. 2016. Reproductive Tourism : Through the Anthropological Reproscope. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 45(1): 417-432.

## 13. Wednesday, 26 May 2021:

> 4:15 pm to 6:00pm (S2) 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:**

1. Bharadwaj, A. Inhorn, M.C. 2015. Conceiving Life and Death: Stem Cell Technologies and Assisted Conception in India and the Middle East. In Das, Veena and Han, Clara (eds). *An Anthropology of Living and Dying in the Contemporary World*. Berkeley: University of California Press Berkeley.
2. Bosshard, Georg. 2012. Assisted Dying – In Search of Appropriate Assistants. *The King's Law Journal*, 23:141- 148.
3. Das, V and Han, C (eds). *An Anthropology of Living and Dying in the Contemporary World*. Berkeley: University of California Press Berkeley. Introduction.
4. Franklin, Sarah, and Margaret Lock, eds. 2003. *Remaking Life and Death: Toward an Anthropology of the Biosciences*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
5. Kaufman, Sharon R., and Lynn M. Morgan. 2005. "The Anthropology of the Beginnings and Ends of Life." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34:317–41.
6. Lock, Margaret. 2002. *Twice Dead: Organ Transplants and Reinvention of Death*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
7. Sanal, A. 2011. *New Organs Within US: Transplant and the Moral Economy*. Durham: Duke University Press.
8. Scheper-Hughes, N. 2000. The Global Traffic in Human organs. *Current Anthropology* 41:191-224.
9. Cohen, L. 1999. Where it hurts: Indian Material for an Ethic of Organ Transplantation. *Daedalus* 128:135.

### **14. Wednesday, 2 June 2021:**

➤ 4:15 pm to 6:00pm (S2) ANSO111 |

### **Class Presentations**