

UC IRVINE, ANTHRO 134A/CLS 178A

# MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

WINTER 2020

TUES/THURS 2:00PM-3:20PM

ROOM: ALP 2300



## Course Description & Objectives

This course is an introduction to the anthropological study of illness, healing, and medicine. We will explore the cultural and historical specificity of what appear to be biological givens, drawing from a variety of anthropological questions, theoretical approaches, and research techniques.

We begin by examining the experience of illness and the ways understandings of disease and health are affected by – and in turn influence – social, cultural, and political concerns. We will approach biomedicine as one of many culturally-produced medical systems, comparing ways of seeing and knowing across traditions and exploring the power of medicine to act as a form of social control.

Finally, we will examine the ways local and global inequalities produce contemporary suffering and the role that anthropology might play in advancing health equity.

### Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the class, students will be able to:

- ♦ Define and apply key concepts used by anthropologists to understand disease, health, and medicine;
- ♦ Analyze patient experiences in relation to sociocultural contexts and structural inequalities;
- ♦ Critically examine and respond to political and ethical concerns facing US and global health systems.

## Professor

**Dr. Angela Jenks**

[ajenks@uci.edu](mailto:ajenks@uci.edu)

949-824-3188

Drop-in student hours: Weds,  
3pm-4:30pm in SBSG 3304

## TAs

Rebecca Richart

[rrichart@uci.edu](mailto:rrichart@uci.edu)

Student office hours: TBA

Gregory Kohler

[gkohler@uci.edu](mailto:gkohler@uci.edu)

Student office hours: TBA

Danielle Tassara

[dtassara@uci.edu](mailto:dtassara@uci.edu)

Student office hours: TBA

## Materials

Fadiman, Anne. *The Spirit Catches You & You Fall Down*.

Hamdy, Sherine and Coleman Nye. *Lissa*.

Packet from Southern California Library

Canvas: [https://  
canvas.eee.uci.edu/courses/23031](https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/courses/23031)

# Course Requirements

## Reading Annotations (10%)

In addition to the required books, assigned readings are available through the course website. Each week, we will collectively annotate some of these assigned readings using the Perusall platform. Please contribute at least FIVE substantive annotations, notes, or comments to each article.

Annotations cannot be made up, but missing two assignments will have no effect on your grade.

## Lecture Activities (15%)

The weekly class sessions are a main source of learning for the course. Please arrive to class on time and plan to stay for the entire session.

Various in-class activities throughout the quarter will give you an opportunity to apply the concepts we have been learning in class.

Activities cannot be made up, but missing two activities will have no effect on your grade.

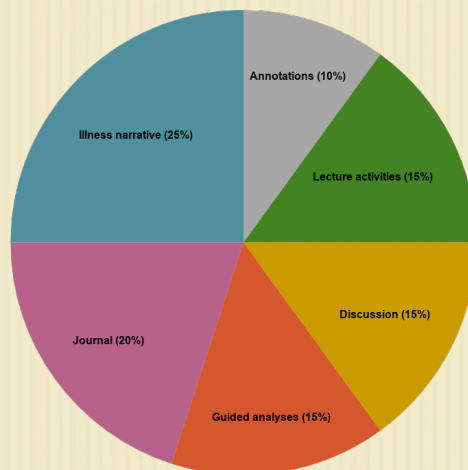
## Discussion Section Activities (15%)

Discussion sections are an important component of the course and offer opportunities for learning in smaller groups.

You will receive credit for participation in at least six (6) weekly discussions throughout the quarter.

Discussions will begin meeting during Week 2.

## Grading



## Scale

A+ ≥ 99.5%	A ≥ 93.5%	A- ≥ 90.0%
B+ ≥ 86.5%	B ≥ 83.5%	B- ≥ 80.0%
C+ ≥ 76.5%	C ≥ 73.5%	C- ≥ 70.0%
D+ ≥ 66.5%	D ≥ 63.5%	D- ≥ 60.0%

## Grade Appeals

If you would like to request a regrade, please submit a written request within 48 hours of receiving the grade. Your request should include a detailed, well-thought-out argument that explains how your work meets the requirements of the assignment/rubric.

## Guided Analyses (15%)

Guided analyses will be required for one assigned podcast and each of the three longer texts used in this class. Response questions will be posted on the course website.

## Journal (20%)

Each week, a journal prompt will be posted in Canvas. You should respond to at least six (6) of these, plus the required journal reflection and self assessment during finals week. These are designed to be informal, reflective assignments and will be graded as a portfolio at the end of the course.

## Illness Narrative (25%)

For this project, you will interview someone who has recently

experienced an illness or other medical event (broadly defined).

After conducting your interview and analyzing your field notes, construct an “illness narrative” that describes the experience and interprets it in relation to one or more of the topics covered in this class.

Complete the project in two stages:

1. Interview field notes & brainstorm: Complete your interview, take detailed field notes, and identify central elements of the narrative.
2. Present your narrative in one of several formats: a written essay (~1,200 words), a graphic narrative, or an audio/video presentation.

Additional information and an interview guide will be posted on the course website.

## Course Policies

If you have any questions not answered in this syllabus, please contact the Professor or your TA. For general questions about the class, feel free to post in the “Questions & Help” section of the Canvas discussion board. For individual questions, you are welcome to visit me during student office hours or contact me through Canvas or email (ajenks@uci.edu). During the week (Mon-Fri), I aim to respond to messages within 24 hours. Please remember to include the name of the course in an email subject line and your full name in your message.

Electronic devices can be important tools for learning and engagement, and we will often use them during class. If you did

not bring a device to class, please participate in class activities using paper and pen and remember to turn in your work to receive credit. Laptops/tablets may be used in class to take notes or access class materials like lecture slides. However, because many individuals are distracted by glowing screens in their line of vision, **the first 3 rows of our classroom will be a “screen free zone.”** If you wish to take notes on a laptop or tablet, please sit in rows 6 or higher. I may ask that all devices be put away during some portions of selected class sessions, so please come to class prepared with pen & paper.

Audio or video recording is not allowed without explicit permission from the instructor.



### Technology & Communication

### Missed or Late Work

Many of the assignments in this class are tied to particular moments in the course progression. That means they're not as useful to your learning if they're completed late. I have designed those assignments with some flexibility: Missing 1-2 reading annotations or lecture activities will not affect your grade, and you should plan to complete at least 6 (of 10) weekly journal entries and attend at least 6 weekly discussion sections.

### Because Stuff Happens...

We all encounter unexpected delays from time to time. Assignment deadlines have a 12-hour, no-question-asked “grace period.” During that time, you may turn the assignment in with no late penalty. After those 12 hours, guided analyses and the illness narrative will lose 5% for each day of lateness unless we have made other arrangements. Please let me know as soon as possible if you have any concerns about deadlines.

## Academic Integrity

Learning, research, and scholarship depend upon an environment of academic integrity and honesty. This environment can be maintained only when all participants recognize the importance of upholding the highest ethical standards.

Academic integrity is a requirement for passing this course. All student work, including class activities, exams, and papers must be the work of the individual(s) receiving credit.

Academic dishonesty includes, for example, cheating on exams or any assignment, plagiarism of any kind (including improper citation of sources), having someone else take an examination or complete an assignment for you (or doing this for someone else), or any activity in which you represent someone else's work as your own.

Violations of academic integrity will be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity and Student Conduct and will receive no course credit.

Please familiarize yourself with UCI's Academic Integrity Policy (<https://aisc.uci.edu/policies/academic-integrity/index.php>) and speak to the Professor if you have any questions about what is and is not allowed in this course.

## Help & Resources

### Academic Support

#### LARC

The [Learning and Academic Resource Center](#) offers several forms of academic assistance, including workshops on academic reading, exam preparation, note-taking, and study techniques.

#### Library

The UCI Library is an excellent research resource and offers a helpful [online guide to Anthropology scholarship](#).

#### Writing Center

The [UCI Center for Excellence in Writing and Communication](#) offers in-person and online consultations for students at any stage of the writing process in any class.

### Access and Inclusion

I am committed to providing an inclusive learning environment and to giving every student the opportunity to succeed in this course.

If, at any point during the course, you encounter a circumstance (mental, physical, cognitive, legal, personal, etc.) that affects your ability to fully access and participate in this course, you are welcome to contact me to discuss your specific needs.

I also encourage you to contact the [UCI Disability Services Center](#). If you have a diagnosis, DSC can help you document your needs and create an accommodation plan. By making a plan through DSC, you can ensure appropriate accommodations without disclosing your condition or diagnosis to course instructors.

### Health and Safety

#### Student Health & Counseling

The [Student Health Center](#) offers a comprehensive outpatient clinic available to all UCI students.

The [Counseling Center](#) offers mental health support services for free to all UCI students. Services include urgent care, consultation, and counseling.

#### UCI CARE

UCI [Campus Assault Resources & Education](#) offers free and confidential support services to those impacted by sexual assault and relationship abuse/violence.

#### UCI Dreamers

The [Dreamers' Resource Office](#) offers support and legal services for AB540, undocumented students, and those from mixed-status families.

### FRESH Basic Needs Hub

#### Food Pantry

The [SOAR Food Pantry](#) offers free need-based food and toiletry supplies on an honor system. There are no requirements to access the pantry.

#### Emergency Meal Swipe Program

UCI students may apply for up to 10 [emergency meal swipes](#) per quarter at the University Dining Commons.

#### Basic Needs Coordinator

If you have difficulty accessing sufficient food to eat everyday or lack a safe and stable place to live, contact the UCI Basic Needs Coordinator, Andrea Gutierrez, at [andrea.g@uci.edu](mailto:andrea.g@uci.edu)



## Course Schedule & Assignments (Changes may be made as needed)

Topic	Date	What to Read	Assignments
Week 1: What is Medical Anthropology?	Tues, 1/7	No readings.	Interactive syllabus  Positions survey
	Thurs, 1/9	Lotfi, Ali. 2019. "How an anthropology course can prepare pre-med students for patient care." <i>US News &amp; World Report</i> , Dec 17.	Journal 1
Week 2: Making Sense of Suffering: Illness, Experience, and Metaphors	Tues, 1/14	Listen: "Bleeding." Episode of the <i>Bodies</i> podcast from KCRW.  Park, Julie. 2000. "'The Worst Hassle is You Can't Play Rugby': Haemophilia and Masculinity in New Zealand." <i>Current Anthropology</i> 41 (3): 443-453.	Guided Analysis: Bleeding
	Thurs, 1/16	Jain, S. Lochlann. 2013. "Cancer Butch." Pg. 67-87 in <i>Malignant: How Cancer Becomes Us</i> .	Journal 2
Week 3: The Normal and the Pathological	Tues, 1/21	Lock, Margaret and P. Kaufert. 2001. "Menopause, Local Biologies, and Cultures of Aging." <i>American Journal of Human Biology</i> 13 (4): 494-504.	
	Thurs, 1/23	Luhrmann, T.M. and R. Padmavati. 2016. "Voices That Are More Benign: The Experiences of Auditory Hallucinations in Chennai." Pg. 99-112 in <i>Our Most Troubling Madness: Case Studies of Schizophrenia across Cultures</i> .	Journal 3
Week 4: Medicalization	Tues, 1/28	Friedner, Michele et al. 2019. "Embracing Multiple Normals." <i>New England Journal of Medicine</i> 381: 2381-2384.  Haldane, Hillary and David Crawford. 2010. "What Lula Lacks: Grappling with the Discourse of Autism at Home and in the Field." <i>Anthropology Today</i> 26 (3): 24-26.	
	Thurs, 1/30	Braslow and Messac. 2019. "Medicalization and Demedicalization: A Gravely Disabled Homeless Man with Psychiatric Illness." <i>New England Journal of Medicine</i> 381.	Journal 4
Week 5: Cultures of Biomedicine	Tues, 2/4	Payer, Lynn. "Borderline Cases: How Medical Practice Reflects National Culture."  Fadiman, <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i> . Ch. 1-5	Illness narrative check-in
	Thurs, 2/6	Fadiman, <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i> . Ch. 6-10  Shaw, Rosalind H. 2018. "More an Inmate Than a Patient: An Injured Anthropologist Experiences Rehab." <i>WBUR</i> , May 4.  Berlin et al. 2019. "The Right and Left Hands of the State." <i>New England Journal of Medicine</i> . 381: 197-201.	Journal 5

## Course Schedule & Assignments (Changes may be made as needed)

Topic	Date	What to Read	What's Due?
Week 6: Healing and Caring	Tues, 2/11	Fadiman, <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i> . Ch. 11-15	
	Thurs, 2/13	Fadiman, <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i> . Ch. 16-19  Taylor, Janelle. 2003. "The Story Catches You and You Fall Down: Tragedy, Ethnography, and 'Cultural Competence.'" <i>Medical Anthropology Quarterly</i> 17(2):159-181.	Journal 6
Week 7: Unnatural Causes: How Inequality Produces Sickness	Tues, 2/18	Wiedman, Dennis. 2012. "Native American embodiment of the chronicities of modernity: reservation food, diabetes, and the metabolic syndrome among the Kiowa, Comache, and Apache." <i>Medical Anthropology Quarterly</i> 26 (4): 595-612.  Hamdy and Nye, <i>Lissa</i> . Foreword and Part I: Cairo.	Guided analysis: Fadiman
	Thurs, 2/20	Hamdy and Nye, <i>Lissa</i> . Part II: Five Years Later.  Lopez, Oscar and Andrew Jacobs. 2018. "In Town with Little Water, Coca-Cola is Everywhere. So is Diabetes." <i>New York Times</i> , July 14.	Illness narrative fieldnotes & brainstorm  Journal 7
Week 8: Visualizing Medical Anthropology	Tues, 2/25	Hamdy and Nye, <i>Lissa</i> . Part III: Revolution.	Guided analysis: Hamdy and Nye
	Thurs, 2/27	Green, Michael and Kimberly Myers. 2010. "Graphic Medicine: use of comics in medicine and healthcare." <i>British Medical Journal</i> . 340.	Journal 8
Week 9 Making Change: Health Activism	Tues, 3/3	Nelson, Alondra. 2016. "The <i>Longue Durée</i> of Black Lives Matter." <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> 106 (10): 1734-1737.  Southern California Library (SCL) Packet	
	Thurs, 3/5	Southern California Library (SCL) Packet	Journal 9
Week 10 Making Change: Applying Medical Anthropology	Tues, 3/10	Farmer, Paul. 2008. "Challenging Orthodoxies: The Road Ahead for Health and Human Rights." <i>Health and Human Rights</i> 10 (1): 5-19.	Guided analysis: SCL Packet
	Thurs, 3/12	No readings.	Journal 10
Final's Week	Illness Narrative and Journal reflection/self-assessment due Tuesday, March 17		