Introduction to Anthropology:  
Social and Cultural Determinants of Health  
ANT 113

Course Description:

Anthropology, a social science discipline, provides a comprehensive understanding of the biological and cultural unity and diversity of humanity. This introductory course will introduce students to the topics, theories, and methods of the discipline, applied to the scientific study of the social and cultural determinants of health, following anthropology’s comparative and holistic approach. Students will examine a variety of topics including culture, ethnicity and race, language and communication, economic systems, political systems, kinship and social organization, gender, religion, art, and social and cultural change. Each of these components of human life influences health and health care and helps us to understand the social and cultural determinants of health.

Course Objectives:

The goals of this course conform to goals of the medical anthropology major and minor:

1. Students will learn anthropology’s basic approach of being life-long trained observers and critical analysts of the social and cultural context of health and healthcare. Upon completion of this course, they will be able to:
   (a) Discuss anthropology’s comparative and holistic perspectives in studying health and healthcare.
   (b) Describe application of anthropology’s methods, theories, and findings to studying health and healthcare.

2. Students will be knowledgeable about the diverse nature and development of healing cultures. Upon completion of this course, they will be able to:
   (a) Explain that perceptions of health and illness are socially and culturally constructed.
   (b) Articulate the interdependencies among health and cultural context.
   (e) Understand the ways in which biological, social, and cultural factors influence perceptions and reactions to health and health care.
(f) Comprehend the relationships between social stratification, access to resources, and well-being.
(d) Demonstrate awareness of cultural competence in health care, enabling effective work across racial, ethnic, and cultural lines.
(g) Know the main social and cultural determinants of health.

3. Students will become familiarized with the importance of being committed a life of service and to the development of the global community. Upon completion of this course, they will be able to:
   (a) Identify norms of universal human rights, particularly the human right to basic health care.
   (b) Discuss the importance of equity and justice in healthcare.

Required Readings:


Course Requirements:

- **Exams**: Students will have a midterm and a final exam (multiple choice questions and /or short-answer questions) that test knowledge of the class room lectures. The two exams account for 60% of the total course grade.
- **Six short quizzes** about the two required readings. They account for 30% of the total course grade (each quiz 5% of total course grade).
- **Active participation**: Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis, but should also actively participate through asking questions, adding comments, and participating in discussions. Attendance will be taken and it is your responsibility to make sure that you are marked as ‘present.’ Attendance and participation account for 10% of the total course grade. You can miss class up to three times – excused and/or unexcused. “Excused” means that you provided me a proof of your absence before you miss class that was approved by me in writing (e-mail). If you miss class four or more times, then you I will deduct 4% from the 10%
for each additional time. However, if you miss class seven or more times, you will receive an F for this course.

- **Homework reports:** Students are expected to search after each class for additional information in the library and online about the themes discussed in class. I will randomly select students to report in class their homework. Students should be able to speak at least 3 minutes. Please note that the report should refer to the previous class period and not an earlier class. If a student is selected but not prepared, 4% will be deducted from the final grade.

**Grading Criteria:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100% – 90%</td>
<td>“outstanding achievement and an unusual degree of intellectual initiative”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89.9% – 85%</td>
<td>“high level of intellectual achievement”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84.9% – 80%</td>
<td>“noteworthy level of performance”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79.9% – 75%</td>
<td>“performance beyond basic expectations of the course”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74.9% – 70%</td>
<td>“satisfactory work”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69.9% – 65%</td>
<td>“work of inferior quality, but passing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>64.9% or less</td>
<td>“failure – no credit”</td>
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<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td></td>
<td>“failure for excessive absences”</td>
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</tbody>
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**Attendance Policy:**

See ‘Active Participation’ in the ‘Course Requirement’-section.

**Academic Honesty Statement:**

If you are found cheating or plagiarizing you will receive a zero for that assignment and an F for the course and you will be reported to the Academic Dean’s Office. A student guide to plagiarism is found on the Creighton homepage and in the Creighton Student Handbook where the penalties are also outlined. Please review these sites prior to completing all writing assignments.
Class Cancellation Policy:

If I am unable to give a lecture due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. illness) I will e-mail the class by the morning of the day of class to inform students that the class is cancelled. Thus, make sure to read your e-mails before coming to class. Further, the Administrative Assistant of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work will post an official flyer on the classroom door informing students that class is cancelled. Please note that the flyer is only valid with the department’s stamp.

List of Course Topics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N.B. The text in small print is selected topics directly related to the MCAT 2015. These topics are explicitly addressed in the respective sections of this course. Pre-med students taking the MCAT 2015 will be tested on these topics.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1. What is anthropology?**  
Human adaptability, variation, and change. General anthropology. The four subfields of anthropology. Anthropology in relation to other academic fields.  
Theoretical paradigms:  
  - Functionalism  
  - Conflict Theories  
  - Symbolic Interactionism  
  - Social Constructionism  
  - Theories of Globalization |
| **2. Applying anthropology**  
Defining applied anthropology. The role of applied anthropology.  
General discussion on social and cultural determinants of health |
| **3. Medical anthropology**  
Defining medical anthropology. Applications for health and health care. |
| **4. Ethics and methods**  
| **5. Adaptation, evolution, and human variation**  
Human race – a discredited concept. Human biological adaptation.  
Evolution, human culture, and health |
| **6. First farmers, cities and states**  
The Neolithic. Food production invention sites. Health implications of the Neolithic.  
Demographic transition  
Epidemiologic transition  
Nutritional transition |
| **7. Culture concept**  
Enculturation/Socialization and Health Behavior |
Front stage vs. backstage self (Goffman)
Agents of socialization
Influence of culture on identity formation
The effect of socialization on identity formation
Culture influences shape expression
Components of social structure
Material culture
Symbolic culture
Values and beliefs
Culture and social groups
Culture and Health Behavior

8. Language and communication
Sociolinguistics. Communication in health care.
Animal signals and communication
Social rules and talk
Provider/Patient interaction dynamics

9. Ethnicity and race
The social construction of race. Stratification and intelligence. Coexistence and conflict. Ethnicity and race as determinants of health.
Notion of self shaped by society and culture,
Social factors influencing identity formation
Influence of group (i.e., reference group)
Ethnocentrism vs. cultural relativism
Ethnocentrism of in-group and out-group
Background expectations (Garfinkel)
Statuses, roles, privilege and prestige Cultural/social capital and social reproduction
Race and inequality in health care

10. Making a living
Barriers to access of health resources
Social exclusion (segregation and isolation)
Environmental justice
Patterns of social mobility
Meritocracy
Health Disparities
Relative and absolute poverty
Culture of poverty argument
Place and exposure to health risks

11. Political systems
Conformity and deviance
Power and obedience
Prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination
Individual vs. institutional discrimination
Interaction between agency and institutions
Power inequality and health
Assimilation
Class, status, and power
Class and inequality in health care
12. **Families, kinship, and descent**
Different types of identities
Definitions of self identity and social identity

13. **Marriage**

14. **Gender**
Gender influences shape expression
Sexual orientation
Gender and inequality in healthcare

15. **Religion and the arts**
Origins, functions, and expressions of religion. Religion and cultural ecology.
Norms
Norms and rituals

**Course Schedule:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
<th>Class Theme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Read “Cultural Context” – Chapter 1</td>
<td>First day of classes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Class theme:</strong> What is anthropology?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Read “Cultural Context” – Chapter 2</td>
<td>Class theme: What is applied anthropology and medical anthropology?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Read “Cultural Context” – Chapter 3</td>
<td>Class theme: Anthropology and the study of health and health care. Quiz 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Read “Cultural Context” – Chapter 4</td>
<td>Class theme: Anthropological research methods and ethics for studying health and health care.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Read “Cultural Context” – Chapter 5</td>
<td>Class theme: Adaptation, evolution, and human variation – implications for human health. Quiz 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Read “Cultural Context” – Chapter 6</td>
<td>Class theme: The invention of agriculture and the development of cities and states – health transitions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>Read “Cultural Context” – Chapter 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Class theme</td>
<td>Reading Requirement</td>
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<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>Class theme: The culture concept – culture, health, and healing. Quiz 3</td>
<td>Read “Cultural Context” – Chapter 8 Class theme: Language and communication – understanding speaking about health and culture and knowing health communication. Midterm exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>Class theme: Language and communication – understanding speaking about health and culture and knowing health communication.</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>Class theme: Ethnicity and race – determining health and health outcomes.</td>
<td>Read “Social Determinants” – Chapter 1+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>Class theme: Economics – determining health and health outcomes. Quiz 4</td>
<td>Read “Social Determinants” – Chapter 5+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>Class theme: Political systems – implications for health and health outcomes.</td>
<td>Read “Social Determinants” – Chapter 7+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th</td>
<td>Class theme: Families, kinship, and descent – health care and the family. Quiz 5</td>
<td>Read “Social Determinants” – Chapter 3+4</td>
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<tr>
<td>14th</td>
<td>Class theme: Marriage – association of relationships and supportive social networks.</td>
<td>Read “Social Determinants” – Chapter 8+15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th</td>
<td>Class theme: Gender – determining health and health outcomes. Quiz 6</td>
<td>Read “Social Determinants” – Chapter 10+11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th</td>
<td>Class theme: Religion and arts – association of religion and art with health and healing.</td>
<td>Read “Social Determinants” – Chapter 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>17th</td>
<td>Final exam</td>
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