**Culture and Health**

**Instructor:** Dr Xiao Mei

**Course Credit:** 2

**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 to 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.

**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 live.
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.
3. To inspire an appreciation of the significant and complex role played by culture in issues related to health and illnesses around the globe.

**Course Requirements and Evaluations:**

1. Attendance and participation in discussions (20%)
2. An in-depth interview about an illness experience: an 800-word report and a 15-minute presentation (40%) （Report due:Week 8; Presentation: Week 9-10）
3. A final paper (40%) (Due: Week 17)

**Suggested General Readings:**

1. Kleinman, Arthur, 1988, *The Illness Narratives*. New York: Basic Book.
2. Whyte, Susan Reynolds, Sjaak van der Geest, and Anita Hardon, 2005, *Social Lives of Medicines*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Michael Winkleman, 2009*, Culture and Health: Applying Medical Anthropology*. New York: Jossey-bass.

**Course schedules:**

**Week 1**

Introduction to the course

Reading:

Parsons, T. 1991. *The Social System*. London: Routledge. [Chapter X]

Kleinman, Arthur, 2020, “Chapter 1: The Meaning of Symptoms and Disorders”. In *The Illness Narratives*. New York: Basic Books.

**Theme I: Social Meanings of Health and Illness**

**Week 2**

Topic: Social Constructions of Illness: Diagnosis

Readings:

Brown, Phil, 1995,“Naming and Framing: The Social Construction of Diagnosis and Illness.” *Journal of Health & Social Behavior* 35:34-52*.*

Jutel, Annemarie, 2009, “Sociology of Diagnosis: A Preliminary Review.” *Sociology of Health and Illness* 31(2): 278-299.

**Week 3**

Topic: Social Constructions of Illness: Stigma and Identity

Readings:

Brown, P.J. and Ron Barrett, 2016, *Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology*, 3rd ed. New York: Routledge.[Ablon, *Nature of Stigma*]

Sontag, S. 1990. *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors.* New York: Anchor Books. [pp.3-26]

**Week 4**

Topic: Normality, Illness, and Public Policy

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.

Taylor, Rosemary C.R., 2013, “The Politics of Securing Borders and the Identities of

Disease.”*Sociology of Health & Illness* 35 (2): 241-54.

**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:

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.

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: 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:The Medical Gaze

Readings:

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.

Foucault, Michel, 2003, *The Birth of the Clinic.* Oxon: Routledge*.* [Introduction]

**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. [Chapter 1&3]

**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.【Chapter 7&8 】

**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.

Crisp, Nigel, 2010, *Turning the World Upside Down: The Search for Global Health in the Twenty-first Century*. London: Royal Society of Medicine Press Ltd. [Chapter 10]

**Week 16**

Review and Q&A