

GENDER AND HEALTH

Anthropology 40825

Spring 2020 M/W 9:30-10:45 am in Corbett Family Hall E202

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Office hours: M 11:00-12:00; T 9:00-10:30
Or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the intersection of gender, health policy, and healthcare around the world, by using an integrative anthropological approach. Gender is frequently a central contributing (though sometimes ignored) factor to people's health. Men and women have different biologies, and it thus stands to reason that their lives—social, economic, political, and biological—would have an effect on their health. What causes different genders to experience different illnesses? What places some genders at greater risk for illness than others? How do different genders across the world experience health policies? Are they affected and constrained by similar factors? How do their work lives affect their experiences with health? How has risk changed through time? How is the body medically produced? How do poverty, race, and discrimination play a role in people's gendered well-being? Through an inquiry-based approach, and through readings from across the sub-disciplines of anthropology, these and other topics will be addressed in this class.

COURSE GOALS:

The goals of this class are threefold: 1) to appreciate the ways that anthropologists have studied health and gender in a variety of contexts, 2) to assess the importance of a gendered perspective on health issues and, 3) to critically understand that health and its related issues are shaped by history as well as by broad social, political, and economic forces.

LEARNING GOALS:

At the end of the semester I expect students to:

1. Apply anthropological and ethnographic methods in their assignments
2. Demonstrate the ability to think critically and articulate their thoughts in class and assignments
3. Apply anthropological critique to cultural problems and situations regarding health and illness
4. Appreciate that a central (and fun!) element of learning is to generate questions, not answers

An Anthropological Affirmation: Why This Course Needs To Be Undertaken Seriously

Recently discourse in the USA is characterized by painfully divisive, often threatening rhetoric that is racist, sexist, anti-immigrant, and misogynistic. This has touched every corner of American society and, indeed, the entire world. The discipline of anthropology is distinctively placed to contribute valuable insights to advance our collective understanding of sexuality, migration, health, cultural diversity, racism, inequality, and structural violence. As Anthropologists we are fully vested in a commitment to protecting the pursuit of free inquiry about the human condition with scholarly rigor, offering the greatest possible opportunity for people to take part in and benefit from that inquiry, and engage the many communities that make up the United States and the world in valuing diversity. As participants in this course all can expect to partake as valued stakeholders in an intellectually informed discourse rooted in core values of human dignity, mutual respect, equal rights, freedom of expression, and freedom from discrimination. We endeavor to build bridges of understanding, not walls of exclusion and division.

ASSIGNMENTS:

I will determine your grade from the following sources in order to evaluate your progress towards attaining the class goals. Further details about these assignments can be found on Sakai.

ASSIGNMENT	PERCENTAGE	DUE DATE(S)
Group Research Project	60% (in 3 parts, each worth 20%)	01/29, 02/19, 03/25, 04/27 or 04/29
Media & Health Paper / Literature Review	20%	04/20
Leading Discussion / Teaching Class	10%	Once in semester
Participation	10%	Daily

I have high expectations from the students in my courses, and grade accordingly. The grading scale I use is as follows: **A = 97-100, A- = 90-96, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D = 60-69, F = under 60.** I do not use a grading curve.

Grading Rubric:

- A – Excellent:** Mastery of course content at the highest level of attainment that can reasonably be expected. Over and above the expected standard. A distinguished result that is excellent with regard to the following aspects: theoretical depth, analytical ability, and independent thought.
- B – Good:** Strong performance demonstrating a high level of attainment. Meets expectations. A good result with regard to the above-mentioned aspects.
- C – Satisfactory:** An acceptable performance demonstrating an adequate level of attainment. Just below expectations. The result is of a satisfactory standard with regard to the above-mentioned aspects.
- D – Poor:** A marginal performance in the required exercises demonstrating a minimal passing level of attainment. Below expectations. The result satisfies the minimum requirements with regard to the above-mentioned aspects, but not more.
- F – Fail:** An unacceptable performance. The F grade indicates that performance in the required exercises has revealed almost no understanding of the course content. Well below expectations. The result does not meet the minimum requirements with regard to the above-mentioned aspects.

Assignments are to be **uploaded to Sakai by 5:00 PM** on the date listed in the syllabus. They should be single-spaced and entitled with your name (e.g. Jones-Assignment#1). Late assignments will be penalized (they will be reduced one grade for every day they are late = from an A- to a B+ and so forth). Once an assignment is three days late, I will not accept it. I strongly encourage you to meet with me prior to the assignment to discuss your ideas. I also encourage you to come to my office to discuss any concerns or questions you have with your assignment grades. Due to the short length of the term, however, these concerns or questions can only be addressed within two weeks after I have returned the assignment.

Assignments for all students:

Group Research Project:

Your aim in this three-part assignment is to explore a current topic that interweaves questions of health and gender—broadly construed. Please turn in a brief 300-word proposed topic (ungraded) no later than January 29th. Each part of this assignment is worth 20%, for a total of 60%. It is a group project, and thus you have to get organized early in the semester (ideally in groups of between 3-4 people).

1. The first assignment is an investigation (comparing and contrasting, delving and analyzing) of how your chosen topic is addressed in the scientific literature and how the media (newspapers, TV news) reports it. Basically, you will search for a recent study that has been mentioned in the news (e.g. the regeneration of cells with different types of workouts, the effect of sugar on the brain, depression medications, etc.) and then figure out what is discussed (and why), what is not discussed (and why), whether the media “gets” it or not, what is gendered about it, etc. You need to address some of the gaps between the scientific study and the

media reporting, aiming for a conclusion not only of the study itself but also of how the media chooses to report information and what effect this might have on gender and health. You should look at more than one news source for your analysis, as then you can see greater elements to compare and contrast. Some good sources to start with are the NY Times, Washington Post, or Guardian science sections where they often publish new research studies. Please write around 2000 (+/- 200) words citing not only the study and the news sources, but any other sources you need to support your argument and discussion.

2. The second assignment is an ethnographic examination of the topic among your ND peers. What do ND students know about the topic? Do they have facts or opinions? What opinions do they have? What is this opinion based on? How did they learn this? How does their information/ knowledge/ opinion differ from what has been published on the topic? Is there a gendered component to the knowledge (e.g. women know more than men, or vice versa, etc.)? If so why? These are just some of the questions that can help to guide your research. My suggestion would be to create a survey for students and then do between 8-10 short interviews with a select number of participants—please come and talk with me to get some feedback on your methods and approach. Please write between 2000-2500 words for your analysis of the data. Cite between 8-10 academic sources that support your analysis.
3. The third and final assignment is a presentation of your topic to the class. The stipulation for this presentation is creativity—don't just do a dry presentation; really delve deep into your creative ideas, and see how you can get your information across clearly but in an original manner. (A picture/painting, short movie, podcast, buzzfeed quiz, etc. are just some of the ideas I have; I'm sure you can create something unforgettable). Your presentation should be between 8-10 minutes long and share not only information about the topic but do so in a non-standard manner.

Participation:

This is a reading-intensive, critical-thinking course based primarily on readings and discussions; it will be managed in the form of a seminar, where student participation in discussion is vital for the class to function and be stimulating. A major part of your grade will be based on the quality of your participation in class discussion. This means not only speaking, but also active listening and meaningful dialogue with classmates. You must attend every class having read and prepared all the assigned materials. Come prepared—active participation in class, evidence of commitment, enthusiasm, and preparedness will help to make this class enjoyable and challenging. As part of your grade, you need to write two questions for every class; the questions can either be for discussion or for clarification. You should add these questions to the class Google Doc **no later than 8:00 am** on the day of class, identifying the questions as yours. This is a shared document, so you can see how people construct questions and think about the material. I expect you to also actively participate in the discussion and demonstrate that you are engaging the course material. Your active participation will count for 10% of your final grade. I will grade you on reasoning, listening, evidence of reading, questions, conduct, as well as leadership. It is important for you to know that it is the **quality** of your participation, and not the quantity, that counts.

Assignments for Undergraduate Students:

Media and Health Paper:

The purpose of this individual assignment (20%) is to engage with a topic and analyze it based on its popular representation. This paper should be between 1800-2000 words. You will have to choose a topic to do with gender and health (the narrower the better) and analyze how it is portrayed and represented in fiction (movies, television, or books). My suggestion would be to choose a broad topic (surrogacy, contraception, masculinity, caregiving, gender based violence, etc.) and narrow it down to something more manageable. Then choose a couple of sources (two books, a book and a movie, a couple of TV shows, etc.) to unpack how the topic is addressed. You could choose contrasting sources or ones that address it in a similar way. You can use examples from different parts of the world and see how the topic appears in different cultural contexts. Regardless, your job is to explain the topic itself as well as how the media addresses it. In what way is the topic discussed (or not)? Is it reactionary? Embarrassing? Commonplace? Stereotyped? Hidden? Why would this be the case? Your goals should be to analyze and critically draw out tacit assumptions in the representations of this issue and connect them to course readings and discussions and ethnographic materials. You will need between 8-10 sources (academic and legitimate non-academic) to support your arguments and ideas. These can be materials from class or beyond.

Leading Discussion:

The course will be run as a seminar, meaning that your participation in class discussion is essential for the class to be intellectually stimulating. A very important part of your grade will be leading a class discussion (10%) to jump-start conversation by providing provoking and incisive questions and ideas. To do this, you, and one or two of your classmates, will lead one discussion during the semester using any methods you deem appropriate. You need to come prepared with questions that allow your classmates to think deeply and critically about the material. You could place these questions in larger context, drawing from daily events or people's lives, or you can divide the class into small groups and have them grapple with an issue. The purpose of this activity is to give you leadership skills as well as to allow the class a different perspective than the one provided by the professor. You should conclude your discussion with questions for broader discussion. The ultimate aim is to help the day's discussion reach a deeper level. It is your responsibility to talk with me at least 10 days before you present so I can guide you through this process.

Assignments for Graduate Students:

I expect students taking this class as a graduate component to take on greater leadership roles in class. This will consist of making sure that grads are paired with undergrads in group projects as well as being active participants (and listeners) in class. Graduate students should not just repeat what is read in the literature, but should aim to synthesize, critique, and evaluate the material, furthering everyone's knowledge.

Literature Review:

An important goal within a graduate career is the production of a final thesis or dissertation. These written products are usually based on empirically collected data, and are divided into chapters. One of these chapters is the literature review (20%). A literature review discusses published information and usually has an organizational pattern, combining both summary and synthesis. A summary is a recap of the important information of the source, but a synthesis is a re-organization, or a reshuffling, of that information. Your literature review might give a new interpretation of old material or combine new with old interpretations. Or it might trace the intellectual progression of the field, including major debates. And depending on the situation, the literature review may evaluate the sources and advise the reader on the most pertinent or relevant. Literature reviews are helpful regardless of what discipline you are in, what stage of your degree you are at, or whether your methods are primarily deductive or inductive. These reviews can serve the twofold goal of focusing your topic/research question and helping your readers (usually your committee members) to understand what the larger point of your research is (the "so what" question). Your goal for this assignment will thus be to write a 4000-word literature review relevant not only to your research but also to our class topic.

Teaching a class:

An important skill to learn as a graduate student is how to teach concepts and ideas to others. To this end, each graduate student will be expected to teach one class (75 minutes) during the semester (10%). You must meet with me before the end of the second week of the semester to talk about your interests and what class you might want to teach.

IMPORTANT POLICIES:

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. I will give you one 'freebie' during the semester, no questions asked. More than **three unexcused absences** will result in the failure of this course. If you have a sickness or other personal matter, make sure you tell your Dean or Residential Life so they can give you an approved absence. If you have job/grad/med school interviews, please provide me with a copy of the invitation you have received. If you have conferences/academic meetings, please let me know at the beginning of the semester, and advise your Dean of this travel.

Classroom culture:

It is everyone's responsibility to create an environment that fosters respect, intellectual stimulation, and allows everyone to participate comfortably. By the same token, texting, using social media, and any other activity that adversely affects your classmates' learning are not allowed.

Academic Code of Honor:

I expect all students to adhere to academic honesty following the tenets of the Notre Dame Honor Code (<https://honorcode.nd.edu/>): “As a member of the Notre Dame community, I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to learn and abide by principles of intellectual honesty and academic integrity, and therefore I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty.” Any work in our class, whether graded or ungraded, is expected to conform to the standards articulated within the course syllabi. All assignments should reflect a student’s own effort, unless otherwise approved by the professor. All research papers and assignments must utilize appropriate citation conventions (APA, AAA, Harvard). A violation of this code is serious and could result in a failing grade.

Disability accommodation:

If you have a documented disability and are authorized by the Sara Bea Center to have special arrangements for assignments, please inform me at the beginning of the course and we can work on what these accommodations will be.

Student mental wellbeing:

I am very cognizant that students might experience mental wellbeing issues such as anxiety, stress, or lack of sleep over the course of the semester. If you are struggling with anything that is affecting your wellbeing please reach out to me, the people at McWell (<https://mcwell.nd.edu/>), St. Liam’s, or others who can advocate for you.

Office hours:

I encourage you to come to my office to discuss your queries, progress in class, or any issues that come up. If you cannot come to my office hours you can make an appointment at a time that suits us both. This is an opportunity for you to ask questions outside of class in a less formal setting.

Policy on personal computers:

I am wary of the overuse of laptops or other communication devices (iPads, cell phones, etc.) in class as they have a great potential to distract. However, they can also be good learning devices. Thus, I will allow them in class with the caveat that if I notice that students are using them to surf the web, check their social media, watch videos, or other activities not related to class we will have to revisit this policy for everyone.

READINGS:

This course has a significant amount of reading, which includes a variety of articles and chapters from several sources targeting specific elements of the course material. A major part of contributing to the discussion is by reading the relevant course material and extracting three major elements from it: what is being said, why is it being said, how it is being said. Through challenging the material, each other, yourselves and, yes, even the professor, the class discussion should bring forth not only the salient points of the reading and topic, but also help you to understand gendered facets of health at a deeper level and place them into their relevant social, political, economic, medical, or cultural context.

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LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE:

<u>Week #1</u> 01/15	<u>Introduction to Gender and Health</u> Get acquainted session	<u>Assignments</u>
<u>Week #2</u> 01/20 01/22	<u>A Little Bit of Theory</u> Sargent & Brettell; Scheper-Hughes & Lock; Mullings & Schultz Lawrence & Bendixen; Martin	
<u>Week #3</u> 01/27 01/29	<u>Local Biologies</u> Lock; Gengo et al. Briggs; Pylypa Film: Changeling (excerpts)	<i>Student-led discussion</i> Group Project Topic due
<u>Week #4</u> 02/03 02/05	<u>Medicalization</u> Humphrey; Abdalla O'Connor & Van Esterik; Teman	<i>Student-led discussion</i>
<u>Week #5</u> 02/10 02/12	<u>Household Health</u> Storey; Browner & Leslie Gray & Sundal	<i>Student-led discussion</i>
<u>Week #6</u> 02/17 02/19	<u>Masculinity</u> Hunt et al.; Padilla et al.; Morioka Inhorn & Wentzell; Jewkes et al. Film: Murderball	Group Project Science and Media paper due
<u>Week #7</u> 02/24 02/26	<u>Poverty</u> Abadía-Barrero; Grauer et al. Scheper-Hughes	<i>Student-led discussion</i>

<u>Week #8</u> 03/02	<u>Violence</u> Voss; Martin et al.	
03/04	Sufrin; Henry	
03/07 to 03/15	<u>No class – Mid-Term break!!</u>	
<u>Week #9</u> 03/16	<u>Embodiment</u> Parrini et al.; Tapias	
03/18	Sadrudin	<i>Student-led discussion</i>
<u>Week #10</u> 03/23	<u>Reproduction</u> Ginsburg & Rapp; Sufrin et al.	
03/25	Farfán-Santos; Dixon; Davis	Group Project Ethnography due
<u>Week #11</u> 03/30	<u>Sexuality</u> Schmitz et al.; Brennan et al.	<i>Student-led discussion</i>
04/01	Gutmann; Masvawure	
<u>Week #12</u> 04/06	<u>Birth and Doulas</u> Davis-Floyd Film: Born in the USA	
04/08	Film: A Doula Story	
<u>Week #13</u> 04/13	<u>Political Economy</u> No class – Easter	
04/15	O'Daniel; Bourgois and Schonberg	<i>Student-led discussion</i>
<u>Week #14</u> 04/20	<u>Health Policy</u> Janes & Corbett; Baker et al.; Hawkes & Buse	Media and Health paper / Literature Review due
04/22 Earth Day	Brunson; Butaric et al.; Singer	
<u>Week #15</u> 04/27	<u>Wrapping Up</u> <i>No reading</i>	Group Project Presentations
04/29	<i>No reading</i>	Group Project Presentations
<u>Finals Week</u>	No exam. Happy summer holidays!	