

# ANTH 312

## INTRODUCTION TO MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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*INSTRUCTOR: Amy Levine*

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

From amulets to antibiotics, and from spirits to specialists, medical anthropology examines ideas of what it means to be sick, to be a healer, and to be healed from a cross-cultural perspective. Medical anthropology looks at traditions of diagnosis and healing across the globe, exploring sickness and health as shaped by wider cultural values, political conditions, ideas about knowledge, the role of medical technologies, and notions of rights and responsibilities.

This course encourages students to examine concepts of disease, suffering, health, identity, and well-being in their immediate experience and beyond. In the process, students will gain a working knowledge of ecological, feminist, critical, phenomenological, and applied approaches used by medical anthropologists. The universality of biomedicine will not be taken for granted; rather, we will examine the plurality of skills and expertise generated by the various political, economic, social, and ethical demands under which biomedicine has developed in different places and at different times. The course will also begin to critically assess some recent efforts to decolonize medical anthropology.

Course content will include studies from at least three continents, which includes recently published research on Indigenous Canadians, Bolivians, Kashmiris, and others.

### **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- Define some key concepts in the field of medical anthropology
- Understand some key assumptions and values embedded in biomedicine
- Critically assess the ethics and effectiveness of global health research, policy and program initiatives aimed at reducing health inequities
- Apply concepts derived from medical anthropology to the analysis of everyday problems