

Institute of Health and Society

**HES9280/MEDFL9280 Medical Anthropology: Current themes and theories**

Course leader: Heidi Fjeld and Daniel Münster

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Dates: Week 41, 09-13 Oct. 2022

Place: Finse

Credit: 5 ECTS

**Abstract:**

This course focuses on anthropological perspectives on health, illness, bodies and medicine. It presents current ethnographic research on the interactions between biology, culture, society, and environments. Working with cases from across the world, we aim to place health-related issues within contemporary debates in the field of medical anthropology. The course will proceed through ethnographic case studies and theoretical interventions to provide critical and comparative perspectives on emerging themes in biomedicine and other medical traditions as they grapple with key challenges of our times. You will closely engage with one book-length ethnography during the course.

**Course design:**

The course will be a combination of lectures, independent work, and seminar-style group work. Each lecture/seminar will be accompanied by mandatory readings, which have to be completed prior to their respective sessions in the syllabus. All mandatory readings will be available online, in Oria (UB) or in Canvas.

**Additional information for the course 2023:**

This year's course focuses on health and the environment. Taking environmental concerns, such as toxicity, pollution, pesticides, as starting points we present and discuss current empirical cases and theoretical approaches to health and medicine at the intersection of medical and environmental anthropology. The course is fully funded for participants, funds provided by *AnthroTox/UiO: Life Science*.

**Mandatory preparation for the course: Reading ethnography**

All students will be required to read a book-length ethnography in preparation for the course (200-300 pages). This reading will introduce students to the specific modes of anthropological research, based on long-term fieldwork and the presentation of findings in research monographs. In the course, you will be asked to answer questions regarding the methodology, field site, writing style, case studies, and theoretical concepts employed in the book. Towards the end of the course, students will each give an oral presentation about "their" book to the class. See list of the eligible books below.

**Examination:**

The course participants will be evaluated as pass/fail, active participation during seminars, oral presentation of a book, and a take home essay after the course.

**How to pack:**

Finse is high altitude in an arctic climate: Expect rain/snowfall and cold temperatures. Most will be placed in shared room (gender based). We strongly recommend to pack hiking boots, woolen jumpers, and a small backpack for walks.

Train: Oslo-Finse 8:25-12:35 (F4 Bergen); travel at own cost.

Program and Syllabus				
<b>Monday, 09<sup>th</sup> October</b>	13:00-14:00	Lunch		
	14:00-15:00	Introduction to the Course	FOR	Fjeld Geissler Münster Prince
	15:00-17:00	Introduction: Anthropology at the intersection of health and the environment	FOR	Fjeld Geissler Münster Prince
	20:00-21:00	Fireplace Conversations	FOR	Münster

Readings Introduction:

Singer, M. 2016. Introduction. *A companion to the anthropology of environmental health*. John Wiley & Sons. Available online:  
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/9781118786949.ch0>

Craddock, Susan, and Steve Hinchliffe. 2015. One world, one health? Social science engagements with the one health agenda. *Social Science & Medicine* 129:1–4.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10871/16595>

Additional Readings

*For an introduction to anthropology:*

Pool, Robert, and Wenzel Geissler. 2005. *Medical anthropology*. McGraw-Hill Education

*For more on medical anthropology in a toxic world:*

Nading, Alex M. 2020. Living in a Toxic World. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 49(1): 209–24. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-010220-074557>

Langwick, Stacey A. 2018. A Politics of Habitability: Plants, Healing, and Sovereignty in a Toxic World. *Cultural Anthropology* 33(3):415–43. <https://doi.org/10.14506/ca33.3.06>

Lock, Margaret (2020). Toxic Environments and the Embedded Psyche. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 34(1): 21-40. <https://doi.org/10.1111/maq.12545>

Livingston, Julie 2012. Neoplastic Africa. Mapping circuits of toxicity and environment. Ch. 2 of *Improvising Medicine*, 29-51. Pdf available in Canvas.

Reading for Fireplace:

Münster, Daniel. 2017. “Zero Budget Natural Farming and Bovine Entanglements in South India.” *Rachel Carson Center Perspectives* 2017 (1): 25–32.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/26241413>.

<b>Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> October</b>	7:00-8:00	Breakfast		
	8:15-10:00	Toxicity: Extraction, Inequality and Exposure	FOR	Geissler Münster
	10:00-12:00	Book lab	GR	Fjeld Geissler Münster Prince
	12:00-13:00	Lunch		
	13:15-16:15	Bodies: Pharmaceuticals, Foods and Metabolism	FOR	Fjeld Prince
	18-19	Dinner		
	20-21	Fireplace Conversations	FOR	Prince

**Readings Toxicity:**

Roberts, Elisabeth. 2017. What Gets Inside: Violent Entanglements and Toxic Boundaries in Mexico City. *Cultural Anthropology* 32(4): 592–619 ([PDF](#))

Shapiro, Nicholas. 2015. Attuning to the Chemosphere: Domestic Formaldehyde, Bodily Reasoning, and the Chemical Sublime. *Cultural Anthropology* 30(3):386-93

Murphy, Michelle. 2017. Alterlife and Decolonial Chemical Relations. *Cultural Anthropology* 32, no. 4: 494–503. <https://doi.org/10.14506/ca32.4.02>.

**Additional Readings:**

Stein, S. and J. Luna 2021. Toxic Sensorium: Agrochemicals in the African Anthropocene. *Environment and Society* 12(1): 87-107.

Jaramillo, P. 2020. Mining Leftovers: Making Futures on the Margins of Capitalism. *Cultural Anthropology* 35(1): 48-73.

Makori, T. 2017. Mobilizing the past: creuseurs, precarity and the colonizing structure in the Congo Copperbelt. *Africa* 87(4): 780-805.

Mitman, Gregg, Michelle Murphy, and Christopher Sellers. 2004. Introduction: A Cloud over History. *Osiris* 19: 1–17. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3655229>.

**Readings Bodies:**

Mol, AnneMarie. 2021. Introduction to *Eating In Theory*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 1-25. Pdf available in Canvas.

Hardon, A., Davatos, I. A. B., & Lasco, G. 2019. Be your product: On youth, multilevel marketing, and nutritional cure-alls in Puerto Princesa, Philippines. *American Ethnologist*, 46(4), 429-443. <https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12830>

**Additional readings:**

Ford, Andrea. 2019. Introduction: Embodied Ecologies. Theorizing the Contemporary, *Fieldsights*, April 25. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/introduction-embodied-ecologies>

And do browse the podcasts in the “Embodied Ecologies” collection, <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/series/embodied-ecologies>

Lamoreaux, Janelle. 2021. “Passing Down Pollution”: (Inter)generational toxicology and (epi)genetic environmental health. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 35(4): 529-546. <https://doi.org/10.1111/maq.12679>

Rahier, Nick 2021. Overheated stomachs: notes on urban life and toxicity in Nakuru, Kenya. *Africa* 91(3): 453-472. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972021000292>

Hardon, Anita. 2021. *Chemical Youth: Navigating Uncertainty in Search of the Good Life*. Cham, Springer International Publishing. Available online, CHOOSE ANY CHAPTER [Chemical Youth: Navigating Uncertainty in Search of the Good Life | SpringerLink](#)

**Reading for Fireplace:**

Prince, Ruth 2021. Cancer and contaminated food. Toxic uncertainties in Kenya. *Anthropology Today* 37(4): 3-6. Special issue, Toxic Flows (PW Geissler & RJ Prince, eds.) <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8322.12662>

<b>Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> October</b>	7:00-8:00	Breakfast		
	8:15-10:00	Health and/as ecology: anthropology of microbes	FOR	Fjeld Münster
	10:00-12:00	Book lab	GR	Fjeld Geissler Münster Prince
	12:00-13:00	Lunch		
	13:15-16:15	Food systems: Agriculture, Pollution, and Malnutrition	FOR	Fjeld Münster
	18-19	Dinner		
	20-21	Fireplace Conversations	FOR	Geissler

**Readings Microbes:**

Lorimer, Jamie. 2016. "Gut Buddies: Multispecies Studies and the Microbiome." *Environmental Humanities* 8 (1): 57–76. doi:10.1215/22011919-3527722.

Chandler, C. I. 2019. Current accounts of antimicrobial resistance: stabilisation, individualisation and antibiotics as infrastructure. *Palgrave communications*, 5(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-019-0263-4>

**Additional reading:**

Fuentes, Agustin. 2019. Holobionts, Multispecies Ecologies, and the Biopolitics of Care: Emerging Landscapes of Praxis in a Medical Anthropology of the Anthropocene. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 33 (1): 156–62. doi:10.1111/maq.12492.

Landecker, Hannah. 2015. Antibiotic Resistance and the Biology of History. *Body & Society*, 1–34. doi:10.1177/1357034X14561341.

Lorimer, Jamie. 2016. Gut Buddies: Multispecies Studies and the microbiome. *Environmental Humanities* 8(1):57-76. <https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-3527722>

Wakefield-Rann, Rachael, Dena Fam, and Susan Stewart. 2020. Microbes, Chemicals and the Health of Homes: Integrating Theories to Account for More-Than-Human Entanglements." *BioSocieties* 15 (2): 182–206. doi:10.1057/s41292-019-00147-7.

**Readings food systems:**

Agard-Jones, Vanessa. 2014. Spray. *Somatosphere*. Accessed August 11, 2023.  
<http://somatosphere.net/2014/spray.html/>. 2 pages.

Melby, Melissa K., and Megan Mauger. 2016. Effects of Agriculture on Environmental and Human Health. In *A Companion to the Anthropology of Environmental Health*, edited by Merrill Singer. The Blackwell companions to anthropology. Chichester, UK, Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 44–67. Pdf in Canvas.

Blanchette, Alex. 2021. Living Waste and the Labor of Toxic Health on American Factory Farm. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, vol. 33 (1): 80-100.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/maq.12491>

**Additional readings:**

Brown, Hannah, and Alex M. Nading. 2019. Introduction: human animal health in medical anthropology. *Medical anthropology quarterly* 33 (1): 5-23.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/maq.12488>

Carson, Rachel. 1962. Silent Spring-I. *The New Yorker* (May 16).

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1962/06/16/silent-spring-part-1>.

Paxson, Heather, and Stefan Helmreich. 2014. The Perils and Promises of Microbial Abundance: Novel Natures and Model Ecosystems, from Artisanal Cheese to Alien Seas. *Social Studies of Science* 44 (2): 165–93. doi:10.1177/0306312713505003.'

Weis, Tony. 2010. The Accelerating Biophysical Contradictions of Industrial Capitalist Agriculture. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 10(3):315–41. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0366.2010.00273.x>

**Fireplace talk:**

Pesticides and Protection in Tanzania (PWG)

<b>Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> October</b>	7:00-8:00	Breakfast		
	8:15-10:00	Infrastructures of Protection: Evidence, Regulation, Monitoring	FOR	Geissler Prince
	10:00-12:00	Book lab	GR	Fjeld Geissler Münster Prince
	12:00-13:00	Lunch		
	13:15-16:15	Activism: Movements, Citizen Science, Environmental/Health Justice	FOR	Geissler Prince
	18-19	Dinner		
	20-21	Fireplace Conversations	FOR	Fjeld

**Readings Infrastructures of Protection:**

Boudia, S. and N. Jas 2014. Introduction: Greatness and Misery of Science in a Toxic World. In: *Powerless Science? Science and Politics in a Toxic World*. (Eds) Soraya Boudia and Nathalie Jas. Oxford: Berghahn, pp.1-25. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qd0tj.5> (PDF available to download on the UiO library site, PDF on canvas)

Petryna, Adriane 2004. Biological Citizenship: The Science and Politics of Chernobyl-Exposed Populations. *Osiris* 19: 250-265. <https://doi.org/10.1086/649405>

**Additional readings:**

Tousignant, Noemi. 2013. Broken Tempos: Of Means and Memory in a Senegalese University Laboratory. *Social Studies of Science* 43(5): 729-753. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312713482187>

Hecht, G. 2012. The Work of Invisibility: Radiation Hazards and Occupational Health in South African Uranium Production. *International Labor and Working-Class History* 81: 94-113. doi:10.1017/S0147547912000051

Nading, A. M. 2017. Local Biologies, Leaky Things, and the Chemical Infrastructure of Global Health. *Medical Anthropology* 36(2): 141-156. DOI: [10.1080/01459740.2016.1186672](https://doi.org/10.1080/01459740.2016.1186672)



Sony, R. K., et al. 2022. What counts as evidence? Examining the controversy over pesticide exposure and etiology in an environmental justice movement in Kerala, India. *Environmental Sociology*: 1-17. doi:10.1080/23251042.2022.2124625

Ureta, S. 2021. Ruination Science: Producing Knowledge from a Toxic World. *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 46(1): 29-52. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162243919900957>

### **Readings Activism:**

Bond, David 2021. Contamination in Theory and Protest. *American Ethnologist*, 48(4): 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.13035>

Fortun, K., et al. 2014. Experimental Ethnography Online. *Cultural Studies* 28(4): 632-642. DOI: [10.1080/09502386.2014.888923](https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2014.888923)

### **Additional readings:**

Armiero, M. and G. D'Alisa 2012. Rights of Resistance: The Garbage Struggles for Environmental Justice in Campania, Italy. *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 23(4): 52-68. DOI: [10.1080/10455752.2012.724200](https://doi.org/10.1080/10455752.2012.724200)

Liboiron, Max, Tironi, Manuel, and Nerea Calvillo. 2018. Toxic politics: Acting in a permanently polluted world. *Social Studies of Science* 48(3):331–49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312718783087>

Murphy, Michelle 2004. Uncertain Exposures and the Privilege of Imperception: Activist Scientists and Race at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in Gregg Mitman, Michelle Murphy and Christopher Sellers, eds., *Landscapes of Exposure: Knowledge and Illness in Modern Environments, Osiris Vol. 19* (University of Chicago Press, 2004) 266-82. <https://doi.org/10.1086/649406>

Tironi, Manuel 2018. Hypo-interventions: Intimate activism in toxic environments. *Social Studies of Science* 48(3): 438–455. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312718784779>

### **Thursday Fireplace:**

Blogpost by Fjeld: Fieldwork on foods in Bhutan  
<https://www.eatwell-bhutan.net/post/haa-district-bhutan>

<b>Friday, 13<sup>st</sup> October</b>	9:00-12:00	Student presentations of the Books	Fjeld Münster Prince
<p>List of books:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adams, Vincanne. 2023. <i>Glyphosate and the Swirl: An Agroindustrial Chemical on the Move</i>. Durham: Duke University Press</li> <li>2. Dumes, Abigail A. 2020. <i>Divided Bodies: Lyme Disease, Contested Illness, and Evidence-Based Medicine</i>. Durham: Duke University Press</li> <li>3. Hetherington, Kregg. 2020. <i>The Government of Beans: Regulating Life in the Age of Monocrops</i>. Durham: Duke University Press</li> <li>4. Hoover, Elizabeth. 2017. <i>The River Is in Us: Fighting Toxics in a Mohawk Community</i>. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press</li> <li>5. Lamoreaux, Janelle. 2023. <i>Infertile Environments. Epigenetic toxicology and the reproductive health of Chinese Men</i>. Durham: Duke University Press</li> <li>6. Moran-Thomas, Amy. 2019. <i>Traveling with Sugar: Chronicles of a Global Epidemic</i>. Berkeley: University of California Press</li> <li>7. Petryna, Adriana. 2002. <i>Life Exposed: Biological Citizens After Chernobyl</i>. Princeton: Princeton University Press</li> <li>8. Tousignant, Noemi. 2018. <i>Edges of Exposure. Toxicology and the Problem of Capacity in Postcolonial Senegal</i>. Durham: Duke University Press</li> </ol>			