SOCA3325: Culture, Health and Illness

Semester 1, 2010
Course Outline

Course Coordinator and Lecturer:

Dr Daniela Heil
Consultation time: Tuesday 3-4pm, Thursday 3-4pm, or by appointment
Office: Behavioural Sciences Building, Room W343
Phone: (02) 4921 6790
Email: Daniela.Heil@newcastle.edu.au

Course description:
This course offers an introduction to medical anthropology and the cross- and inter-cultural belief systems that relate to health and illness. We will explore different cultural understandings and conceptualisations of health and illness causality, and the practices different cultural groups use and apply to take care of their health and illness. Using a wide range of ethnographic case studies, the different lectures will examine cross- and inter-cultural approaches to the social construction of health and illness, the role of symbolism in healing, shamanistic practices,
embodiment and emotions, biomedicine and science, gender and health, alternative healing practices, health promotion and regulation, bodily and mental disorders, as well as the working with medical technologies (such as organ transplantation and screening the body).

Transitional arrangements:
Students who have successfully completed SOCA2020 are ineligible.

Course Rationale:
This course contributes to the School of Humanities and Social Science's interest in the way in which cultural practices and belief systems are constructed and organised over time. This includes the negotiating of different cultural understandings of health, illness and healing. Within the local and broader community, there is a demand for social and cultural analyses of health-related practices that are often perceived as different and/or troubling. In particular there are demands for more complex understandings of the social and cultural constituents of health and illness, and the way in which peoples in different parts of the world understand health, illness and healing, and the wider socio-economic and cultural determinants related to it.

Course objectives
The course will develop students' analytical skills in reference to critically exploring and analysing social practices and cultural understandings and assumptions through:
1. An appreciation of the depth and the breadth of knowledge in the social sciences.
2. A capacity to think critically and creatively about society, as well as their personal participation in and contribution to society.
3. High level oral and written communication skills.
4. Responsiveness to the demands of the workplace, the broader community, and engagement in development studies and with applied approaches.

Upon completion of this course students will be able to demonstrate:
1. An understanding of the different theoretical perspectives used to study cultural practices of health and illness.
2. Knowledge of the way in which experiences are culturally constituted and socially controlled.
3. An ability to critically analyse cultural understandings, representations and social practices.
4. Skills in giving oral presentations, writing academic essays, undertaking and contributing to applied and policy research.

Course content
Topics may include:
1. Theories of the way in which experiences are symbolically and socially constituted.
2. Theories of social and cultural approaches to health and illness.
3. Ethnographic studies of how relationships are negotiated, understandings mediated and meanings constructed, with a particular emphasis on cultural difference.
4. Classic and contemporary ethnographic studies of health and illness.
5. The political economy of health and illness.

Assumed knowledge
40 units of study at 1000 level
Contact hours
Lecture for 1 hour per week for full term
Tutorial for 1 hour per week for full term

Assessment items to be completed

**Essay 1, 40%, 2000 words**  
**Due:** Friday, 16 April 2010

**Essay 2, 40%, 2000 words**  
**Due:** Friday, 4 June 2010

**Presentations/Tutorial, 20%, 1000 words**  
**Due:** 2 weeks after presentation

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<td>Tutorials (beginning in Week 2)</td>
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**Online Tutorial Registration:**
Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system. Refer to: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/registration.html

NB: Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

**Essential Criteria in Assessment**
This course contains compulsory components or assessment items that must be satisfactorily completed in order for a student to receive a pass mark or better for the course. These essential elements are described in the CTS. Refer to: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000648.html

**Studentmail and Blackboard**
Please refer to: https://blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/webapps/login/

This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly, please use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a regular basis (at least once a week).
IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity, honesty, and a respect for knowledge, truth and ethical practices are fundamental to the business of the University. These principles are at the core of all academic endeavour in teaching, learning and research. Dishonest practices contravene academic values, compromise the integrity of research and devalue the quality of learning. To preserve the quality of learning for the individual and others, the University may impose severe sanctions on activities that undermine academic integrity. There are two major categories of academic dishonesty:

Academic fraud is a form of academic dishonesty that involves making a false representation to gain an unjust advantage. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it can include:

a) falsification of data;

b) using a substitute person to undertake, in full or part, an examination or other assessment item;

c) re-using one's own work, or part thereof, that has been submitted previously and counted towards another course (without permission);

d) making contact or colluding with another person, contrary to instructions, during an examination or other assessment item;

e) bringing material or device(s) into an examination or other assessment item other than such as may be specified for that assessment item; and

f) making use of computer software or other material and device(s) during an examination or other assessment item other than such as may be specified for that assessment item.

g) contract cheating or having another writer compete for tender to produce an essay or assignment and then submitting the work as one's own.

Plagiarism is the presentation of the thoughts or works of another as one's own. University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

a) copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;

b) using another person's ideas without due acknowledgment;

c) collusion or working with others without permission, and presenting the resulting work as though it were completed independently.

Turnitin is an electronic text matching system. During assessing any assessment item the University may:

- Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or
- Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a text matching service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future checking).
- Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking.
RE-MARKS AND MODERATIONS
Students can access the University's policy at:

MARKS AND GRADES RELEASED DURING TERM
All marks and grades released during term are indicative only until formally approved by the Head of School.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING ASSESSMENT ITEMS
*Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations* items must be submitted by the due date in the Course Outline unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension. Unapproved late submissions will be penalised in line with the University policy.

Requests for Extensions of Time must be lodged no later than the due date of the item. This applies to students:
- applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or
- whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment.

Students must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, as outlined in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure at:

Note: different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks.

Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:
- Special Consideration Requests must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.
- Rescheduling Exam requests must be received no later than 10 working days prior the first date of the examination period.

Late applications may not be accepted. Students who cannot meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak firstly to their Program Officer or their Program Executive if studying in Singapore.

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS
University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness. If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies please feel free to discuss your support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator.

Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au. As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester. For more information on confidentiality and documentation visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website: www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability
CHANGING YOUR ENROLMENT
Students enrolled after the census dates listed in the link below are liable for the full cost of their student contribution or fees for that term.

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/fees/censusdates.html

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of term. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of term will result in a fail grade.

Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of term, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of term must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with staff in the Student Hubs or with your Program Executive at PSB if you are a Singapore student.

To check or change your enrolment online, go to myHub: https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au

STUDENT INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

Various services are offered by the Student Support Unit:
www.newcastle.edu.au/service/studentsupport/

The Student Hubs are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students studying in Australia. Student Hubs are located at:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Callaghan Campus</th>
<th>Port Macquarie students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Building</td>
<td>contact your program officer or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Hub: Level 2, Student Services Centre</td>
<td><a href="mailto:EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au">EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Precinct</td>
<td>Phone 4921 5000</td>
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<tr>
<td>City Hub &amp; Information Common, University House</td>
<td>Singapore students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Coast Campus (Ourimbah)</td>
<td>contact your PSB Program Executive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Hub: Opposite the Main Cafeteria</td>
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OTHER CONTACT INFORMATION

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Faculty Websites</th>
<th>General enquiries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/</a></td>
<td>Callaghan, City and Port Macquarie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/</a></td>
<td>Phone: 02 4921 5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/engineering/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/engineering/</a></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au">EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/health/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/health/</a></td>
<td>Ourimbah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/science-it/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/science-it/</a></td>
<td>Phone: 02 4348 4030</td>
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Rules Governing Undergraduate Academic Awards
www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000311.html

Rules Governing Postgraduate Academic Awards

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<tr>
<th>The Dean of Students</th>
<th>The Dean of Students (Ourimbah)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Debytey in Students</td>
<td>Phone: 02 4921 5806;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Dean of Students (Ourimbah)</td>
<td>Fax: 02 4921 7151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au">resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
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This course outline will not be altered after the second week of the term except under extenuating circumstances with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of the change.

IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer to: https://blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/webapps/login/

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
- Online copy submission to Turnitin
- Penalties for Late Assignments
- Special Circumstances
- No Assignment Re-submission
- Re-marks & Moderations
- Return of Assignments
- Preferred Referencing Style
- Student Representatives
- Student Communication
- Essential Online Information for Students

There is no required textbook for this unit of study.

Hard copies of the set tutorial readings are available in the course reader, which can be purchased from the university bookshop.
Grading guide

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49% or less</td>
<td>Fail (FF) An unacceptable effort, including non-completion. The student has not understood the basic principles of the subject matter and/or has been unable to express their understanding in a comprehensible way. Deficient in terms of answering the question, research, referencing and correct presentation (spelling, grammar etc). May include extensive plagiarism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>50% to 64%</td>
<td>Pass (P) The work demonstrates a reasonable attempt to answer the question, shows some grasp of the basic principles of the subject matter and a basic knowledge of the required readings, is comprehensible, accurate and adequately referenced.</td>
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<tr>
<td>65% to 74%</td>
<td>Credit (C) The work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question, a capacity to integrate research into the discussion, and a critical appreciation of a range of different theoretical perspectives. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought. The work is coherent and accurate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>75% to 84%</td>
<td>Distinction (D) Evidence of substantial additional reading and/or research, and evidence of the ability to generalise from the theoretical content to develop an argument in an informed and original manner. The work is well organised, clearly expressed and shows a capacity for critical analysis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>85% and above</td>
<td>High Distinction (HD) All of the above, plus a thorough understanding of the subject matter based on substantial additional reading and/or research. The work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed and insightful discussion of the topic, particularly the theoretical issues involved, and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for critical analysis.</td>
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Non-Discriminatory Language

Students are required to use non-discriminatory language. This includes avoiding the use of "he" to refer to men and women. Two easy ways of doing this are to use the plural (ie. they) or "s/he" (the short form for "he or she"). The terms "Aboriginal" and "Aborigines" are spelt with a capital A, just like "English," "French" or "Spanish".
ESSAY QUESTIONS

Please submit your essays to Turnitin as well as a hard copy.

The list of references is merely an initial guide. You do not necessarily need to read all of the references listed, and you are encouraged to find your own references in addition.

ESSAY 1:
Your first essay (2000 words) is to be submitted by Friday 16th April 2010, 5pm.

Please answer 1 (one) of the following questions:

Q1. What does it mean to say that illness is socially constructed? Focus your discussion on the ways in which ‘bodily experience’ becomes a symbol or metaphor for social conflicts.


Q2. Using ethnographic examples from both Western and Indigenous contexts, critically examine the social construction of the concepts of ‘health’ and ‘well-being’. Your discussion should address the relationship between both concepts as well.


Izquierdo, Carolina (2005) When "health" is not enough: societal, individual and biomedical assessments of well-being among the Matsigenka of the Peruvian Amazon. Social Science and Medicine 61:767-783.


Q3. Discuss how symbolic healing systems work: Using examples from both Western and non-Western cultures, outline mechanisms by which metaphors play a powerful role in treating illness.


**Q4.** Critically examine the idea of ‘biomedicine as a culture’. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement, examining references to support your position.


**ESSAY 2:**
Your second essay (2000 words) is to be submitted by **Friday, 4th June 2010, 5pm**.

Please answer 1 (one) of the following questions:

**Q1.** Critically examine the relationship between models of traditional shamanism and western psychotherapy. What parallels exist between these two forms of healing, and what important distinctions can be drawn?

Q2. Critically discuss social issues that are raised through the use of the new reproductive technologies, by exploring the role(s) that science and medical imagery play in medicalising women's bodies.


Q3. Critically explore the meanings of ‘hybrid bodies’ in reference to the medical technology of organ transplantation. In your discussion you should take patient as well as health care provider perspectives into account.


Q4. Critically explore the ways in which people mediate medical pluralist approaches, by drawing particular attention to the concepts of ‘body’ and ‘self’.


**You must keep a copy of your essay:** The School of Humanities and Social Science will take no responsibility for an essay that goes astray.
The essay is to be referenced in accordance with the Harvard system. (Consult your tutor if you are unfamiliar with this system. If you do not already have a copy of the WRITING YOUR ESSAY guide please obtain one from the School of Humanities and Social Science Office.) Each of the essays is worth 40% of your assessment.

In this course, it is recommended that you use the Harvard system for documenting sources. This involves noting author, date and page number/s for in-text citations that refer readers to a list of references. An in-text citation names the author of the source, gives the date of publication and specifies the page number. Direct quotes are to be indented and also must include author, date and page number. At the end of the essay, a list of references provides publication information about the sources; the list is alphabetised by authors' last names. If the reference you are using does not have an author, put n.a. (=no author) instead.

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Lecture Topics and Assessment at a Glance</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March</td>
<td>Introductory lecture / No tutorials <em>Introducing Culture, Health and Illness</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March</td>
<td><em>The Culture of Biomedicine: Medicine as Culture?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March</td>
<td><em>Social Constructions of Illness</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March</td>
<td><em>Health Beliefs and Aboriginal Well-Being</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; April</td>
<td><em>Rituals, Symbolism and Healing</em></td>
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<td><strong>Easter Break: 2-11 April 2010</strong></td>
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| 6    | 15<sup>th</sup> April | *Shamanism and Psychotherapy*  
**ESSAY 1 due Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> April before 5pm** |
| 7    | 22<sup>nd</sup> April | *Culture and Madness* |
| 8    | 29<sup>th</sup> April | *Health Promotion and the Regulated Body* |
| 9    | 6<sup>th</sup> May    | *Medical Pluralism* |
| 10   | 13<sup>th</sup> May   | *The Medicalisation of Women’s Bodies* |
| 11   | 20<sup>th</sup> May   | *Organ Transplantation and Meanings of ‘Death’* |
| 12   | 27<sup>th</sup> May   | *Critical Medical Anthropology* |
|      |           | **ESSAY 2 due Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> June before 5pm** |
**Week 1: Introducing Culture, Health and Illness**

In this session we will explore the relationships between culture, health and illness, and begin with an introduction to the course and the discipline of medical anthropology. We will look at cross-cultural definitions of health and illness, and cover some introductory concepts of Western biomedical distinctions of mind and body and what occurs when we get ill. We will compare these understandings with concepts of disease causality in other societies.

Further introductory information can also be found here:

http://www.medanthro.net/definition.html

**Background Reading:**


No tutorials this week

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**Week 2: The Culture of Biomedicine: Medicine as Culture?**

Biomedicine and biomedical understandings have come to influence health, illness and healing practices of societies worldwide. In this lecture we will explore the dominance and power inherent in the system of biomedicine and reflect on the ways in which it is, and continues to be, socially and culturally constructed. Expanding the distinctions of mind and body referred to in the previous lecture, we will explore ethnographic and theoretical approaches to disease, the physicality of the body and the medical body. This will also include the concept of ‘scientific paradigm’, medicalisation processes and medical technologies.

**Background Reading:**


Tutorial: Based on the readings by Finkler and Kleinman, consider the dissimilarities and commonalities between the authors’ approaches to biomedicine. Does Kleinman’s approach to biomedicine differ from the way(s) in which he illustrates ‘the culture of biomedicine’? How does Finkler address the similarities, and the differences between biomedicine and sacred healing? How does Finkler’s conceptualisation of the sacred healing system influence your thinking about the biomedical system?

Required Tutorial Readings:

Week 3: Social Constructions of Illness
Disease is primarily seen as expressing a biophysical emphasis, something that happens *to* and *within* the body; illness refers to how sickness is experienced both physiologically and within larger social contexts. What this implies is that how illness is embodied and experienced depends in large part on the social relationships within which persons are situated and participate in. We thus look at social aspects of disease causation, how different social conditions are somatised in ways that are at times damaging for health, and how the matrix of social relationships affects, and may contribute to, the healing trajectory.

Background Reading:

Tutorial: Discuss the ways in which both Pollock and Sansom refer to the social construction of illness. What constitutes Kulina conceptions of ‘illness’? How do you understand the relationship between ‘personhood’ and ‘social issues’ in Pollock’s reading? And how would you describe Kulina illness beliefs in your own terms? What does Sansom’s illustration of souvenirs of illness imply as far as the social construction of illness is concerned? Discuss the ways in which the ‘the sick who do not speak’ are constituted socially.
Week 4: Health Beliefs and Aboriginal Well-Being

In this session we explore commonalities, differences and relationships between ‘health’, ‘health beliefs’ and ‘well-being’. We will examine how experiences and understandings of health beliefs and well-being are socially, culturally and historically mediated. Using the concept of Aboriginal well-being, we will aim to detach ourselves from the inter-cultural conceptualisations of health, disease or illness — introducing us to the idea that Indigenous well-being can be understood as a continuously transforming process of bodily experiences and the relationship between embodied selves and social selves.

Background Reading:
Izquierdo, Carolina (2005) When "health" is not enough: Societal, individual and biomedical assessments of well-being among the Matsigenka of the Peruvian Amazon. Social Science and Medicine 61:767-783.

Tutorial: Discuss how Adelson illustrates the concept of ‘health’, and the Cree concept of ‘being alive well’. How does Adelson understand the relationship between those two concepts? What does Heil’s approach to the concept of ‘Aboriginal well-being’ entail? Discuss the way(s) in which relationships between ‘embodied selves’ and ‘social selves’ pertain to Aboriginal well-being.

Required Tutorial Readings:
Week 5: Rituals, Symbolism and Healing

In this lecture we will look at particular aspects of healing systems and their effectiveness. A consistent element underpinning successful healing is faith in the explanatory system and the therapeutic strategies employed. One clear example is the efficacy of placebos in effecting health improvements. We will consider how symbols and metaphors allow healing processes to take place by facilitating an integration of mental and physical processes.

Background Reading:

Tutorial: Consider the ways in which the relationship between the healer and patient affects healing. To what extent is sickness cured by direct ministrations to the body? What role does meaning play in the healing process?

Required Tutorial Readings:

Easter Break: 2 – 11 April 2010

Week 6: Shamanism and Psychotherapy

Shamanism has been widely regarded as one of the oldest forms of healing in human society. It typically involves communication between the shaman and the supernatural world. Such communication occurs when the shaman enters an altered state of consciousness. In this lecture we will consider what is involved in this process of undergoing an altered state of consciousness within shamanic cultures — is it a form of physiological and spiritual mastery that has therapeutic effects for the individual and social body, a kind of primitive psychotherapy, or is it a form of mental pathology?

Background Reading:


**Tutorial**: In light of the reading by Tsing, how valid is Hutson’s comparison between the rave and shamanic healing? What sort of similarities do you see, and what sort of differences? Discuss how both of these contexts differ from the biomedical clinic? And what is the source of their success?

**Required Tutorial Readings:**


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**Week 7: Culture and Madness**

Some theorists consider madness to be present in all human societies; others argue that the extent and the embodied manifestations of madness vary widely depending on social attitudes to behavioural abnormality. This week we will consider competing arguments for the universality of madness and look at various theories that account for observable variation in definition, prevalence and treatment modalities.

**Background Reading:**


**Tutorial:** Based on the readings by Connor and Browne, consider the ways in which madness is conceptualised in Java and Bali. What does Connor understand to be the root cause of the abnormal behaviours she describes in her article? What does Browne understand to be the root cause of Anik’s behaviour? Discuss to what extent Western models of mental illness have penetrated these two cultural contexts?

**Required Tutorial Readings:**

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**Week 8: Health Promotion and the Regulated Body**

As disease mortality and morbidity have evolved in recent years, so too the focus on how to stay healthy has changed. Rather than concentrating on terminal illnesses, in industrialised societies the attention has shifted to how we live our lives and how we can modify behaviours to reduce the risk of ill-health. However, the question arises: At what point does attention to what we do in our everyday lives become a form of surveillance that elevates certain people to the category of a ‘good’ person because they abide by all the conventional indicators of health promotion and conversely creates the ‘unhealthy’ individual who becomes stigmatised for his or her lifestyle?

**Background Reading:**

**Tutorial:** How do Crawford and Metcalfe explore the relationship between ‘self’ and ‘other’? What role do understandings of health play in promoting an obsessive concern with body and body image? To what extent do publicly encouraged health practices reflect social attitudes towards individual moral character?
Required Tutorial Readings:

Week 9: Medical Pluralism
Since medical anthropological debates have come to the fore, many of its practitioners have grappled with the phenomenon of medical pluralism. In all contemporary societies a variety of medical applications and health care options exist. Different kinds of health care imply different techniques and different ideas of the body and health. This lecture will address how people’s medical traditions respond to new theories of disease causation and treatments. With reference to this framework, we will also explore the conceptualisation of boundaries, identity and the body.

Background Reading:

Tutorial: How does Price approach, and use, the concept of ‘medical pluralism’? How does the author illustrate the ‘boundaries’ of the different medical systems in her article? Price explores the relationship between ‘medical pluralism’ and ‘cultural identity’: Discuss the implications of these notions for each other.

Required Tutorial Readings:
Week 10: The Medicalisation of Women’s Bodies

The development of biomedicine over the past few centuries has led to enormous changes in our understanding of the human body and its functions: penetrated by science, the body has been medicalised as well as commodified. The female body has become a particular focus of scientific and medical discourses, and women’s reproductive functions have been defined in terms of abnormalities that must be treated through medical intervention.

**Background Reading:**

**Tutorial:** In light of both readings, how have women’s bodies been constructed and understood by biomedicine, its approaches and understandings? How do women react to biomedical discourses on reproductive health? Do they passively accept the dominant constructions of their bodies?

**Required Tutorial Readings:**

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Week 11: Organ Transplantation and Meanings of ‘Death’

This week we will refer to the biomedical technology of organ transplantation. Drawing on ethnographic case studies, we will trace how this biomedical technology is produced through the agencies of tools and techniques, doctors, patients and the public. The constitution and transformation of physical bodies and individual identities through this technological practice,
and its challenging of the often assumed human desire to protect personal boundaries and to guard body integrity, will be the focus of this lecture.

**Background Reading:**

**Tutorial:** With reference to the biomedical technology of organ transplantation, how do you think about the constitution of ‘death’? Discuss the concept of ‘brain death syndrome’. What constitutes death in Japan? Discuss the implications of re-defining death in Japan in order to implement transplant technology. What is Sharp’s article about, and what is she aiming to achieve with her writing?

**Required Tutorial Readings:**

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**Week 12: Critical Medical Anthropology**

This lecture summarises many of the perspectives explored throughout the semester by focusing on medical anthropology’s contributions to understanding culture, health, illness and healing. In particular we look at the distinctions between *how* and *where* we lodge causality and the need to integrate a phenomenology of what people think and feel with a larger political economy focus on structural forces governing everyday choices.

**Background Reading:**

**Tutorial:** What does Taussig try to do in his article? What does he argue? In light of the discussion by Taussig, how should sensations such as hunger be understood? What is more important in understanding these experiences: individual meaning or the material contexts in which they arise?

**Required Tutorial Readings:**