

Media, Medicine, and Justice

Instructor: Prof. CHEUNG Shoan Yin (she/ her/ hers)

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Course Hours:

Friday 6:45 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

CKB UB03

Cultural meanings of health and disease are shaped not only by scientific and medical discourses but also by media technologies, from films to smart phones to medical imaging devices. Through topics like mental health, vaccine politics, and surveillance, we will learn how media facilitates ideas about fitness and citizenship, normal vs. abnormal, and public support for health interventions in times of profound global inequality and geopolitical tension. We will also explore how individuals and collectives understand and contest biomedical knowledge, and why race, class, gender, sexuality, and other categories of social difference matter in health and medicine.

This course introduces fundamental concepts in the medical humanities. It assumes no prior knowledge and welcomes students from any academic background and experience.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the role of media and culture in framing health and disease
- Explain key theories about the relationship between health, medicine and society
- Become familiar with shifting definitions of medicine and medical authority
- Analyze the relationship between individual identity, social organization, and health policy

Assessment

Your grade will be assessed according to the assignment breakdown and criteria listed below. Generally, performance that exceeds or falls short of expectations within a grade category will receive a modification of + / - to the overall letter grade.

Participation	25%
Discussion Leader	25%
Current Events Short Paper	15%
Final Project	35%

1. Jan. 12 Introduction: Media, Medicine and Justice

- Janelle Taylor, "Confronting 'Culture' in Medicine's 'Culture of No Culture,'" *Academic Medicine* (2003)
- Raanan Gillon, "Welcome to the Medical Humanities – And Why," *Journal of Medical Ethics* (2000)

2. Jan. 19 The Politics of Immunity

- Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor*, *New York Review of Books* (1978)
- Emily Martin, "Toward an Anthropology of Immunity: The Body as Nation State," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* (1990)
- Aronowitz et. al, "HPV Vaccination Campaigns: Masking Uncertainty, Erasing Complexity," *Three Shots at Prevention* (2012)

Recommended:

- Eula Bliss, *On Immunity* (2015)
- Donna Haraway. "The Biopolitics of Postmodern Bodies: Constitutions of Self in Immune System Discourse." *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991. 203-230.
- Priscilla Wald, *Contagious: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative* (2008)

3. Jan. 26 Disease and the Other

- Richard Brock, "Of Zombies, AIDS, and 'Africa,' Non-Western Disease and the 'Raciocultural' Imagination," *Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture* (2013)
- Dorothy Nelkin, "AIDS and the News Media," *The Milbank Quarterly* 69 (1991)
- Evelyn Hammond, "Race, Sex, and the Construction of 'Other,'" *Radical America* (1987)

Recommended:

- Christie Milliken, "Contenance of the Continent: The Ideology of Disease and Hygiene in World War II Training Films," in Friedman, *Cultural Sutures* (2004)

- Kristen Ostherr, “Invisible Invader: The Global Body in Public Health Film,” in Friedman, *Cultural Sutures* (2004)
- Howard Markel and Alexandra Stern, “The Foreignness of Germs: The Persistent Association of Immigrants and Disease in American Society,” *Millbank Quarterly* (2002)

4. Feb. 2 Framing Awareness

- Faber et. al., “What about the Cause? The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics and the Pinkwashing of Breast Cancer Activism,” *Shopping for Change: Consumer Activism and the Possibilities of Purchasing Power* (2017)
- Samantha King, “An All-Consuming Cause: Breast Cancer, Corporate Philanthropy, and the Market for Generosity,” *Social Text* (2001)

5. Feb. 9 Lunar New Year Holiday

6. Feb. 16 Medicine and Social Control

- Margaret Lock, “Medicalization and the Naturalization of Social Control,” *Encyclopedia of Medical Anthropology* (2004)
- Emily Lim Rogers, “Recursive Debility: Symptoms, Patient Activism, and the Incomplete Medicalization of ME/CFS,” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* (2022)
- Rubinstein and Sakakibara, “Diagnosing Hikikomori: Social Withdrawal in Contemporary Japan,” *Medical Anthropology Theory* (2020)

Recommended:

- Julian Gill-Peterson, “Sex in Crisis: Intersex Children in the 1950s and the Invention of Gender,” *Histories of the Transgender Child* (2018)
- Ian Hacking, “Making Up People,” *London Review of Books* (2006)

7. Feb. 23 Women’s Bodies, Women’s Knowledge?

- Lisa Bowleg, “The Problem with the Phrase *Women and Minorities*: Intersectionality – and Important Theoretical Framework for Public Health,” *American Journal of Public Health* (2012)

- Kelly O'Donnell, "Our Doctors, Ourselves: Barbara Seaman and Popular Health Feminism in the 1970s," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (2019)
- Nancy Tuana, "The Speculum of Ignorance: The Women's Health Movement and Epistemologies of Ignorance," *Hypatia* (2020)

Recommended:

- Sandra Harding, *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives* (1991)

8. Mar. 1 Mental Health

- Jonathan Metzl, "Selling Sanity through Gender: The Psychodynamics of Psychotropic Advertising," *Journal of Medical Humanities* (2003)
- Blum and Stracuzzi, "Gender in the Prozac Nation: Popular Discourse and Productive Femininity," *Gender and Society* (2004)
- Ethan Watters, "The Mega-Marketing of Depression in Japan," *Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche* (2010)

Recommended:

- Sarah Rosenfield, "Triple Jeopardy? Mental Health at the Intersection of Gender, Race, and Class," *Social Science and Medicine* (2017)

9. Mar. 8 Reading Week

10. Mar. 15 Seeing the Fetus

- Tine Gammeltoft, "Sonographic Images and Selective Reproduction in Hanoi," in *Haunting Images: A Cultural Account of Selective Reproduction in Vietnam* (2014)
- Janelle Taylor, "The Public Fetus and the Family Car: From Abortion Politics to a Volvo Advertisement," *Public Culture* (1992)

11. Mar. 22 Final Project Workshop: Research Methods

- Film: *Unrest* (2017)

12. Mar. 29 Easter Holiday

13. Apr. 5 Keeping Track

- Xin Liu, “Keeping Fit in the Smog: Health, Self-Tracking and Air Pollution in Post-Socialist China,” *Catalyst* (2021)
- Natasha Schüll, “Data for Life: Wearable Technology and the Design of Self-Care,” *BioSocieties* (2016)

Recommended:

- José Van Dijck & Thomas Poell (2016) “Understanding the promises and premises of online health platforms,” *Big Data & Society* (2016)
- Deborah Lupton, *Digital Health: Critical and Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives* (2017)

14. Apr. 12 Patients in Cyberspace

- Priscilla Song, “Biotech Pilgrims and the Transnational Quest for Stem Cell Cures,” *Medical Anthropology* (2010)
- Alan Peterson, Allegra Schermuly, and Alison Anderson, “The Shifting Politics of Patient Activism: From Bio-Sociality to Bio-Digital Citizenship,” *Health* (2018)

Recommended:

- Paul Rabinow, “Artificiality and Enlightenment: From Sociobiology to Biosociality,” *Anthropologies of Modernity* (2005)

15. Apr. 19 Final Presentations