

Department of Anthropology

ANTHRO 2290B-650 – Cultures of Health, Illness, Disability and Healing

BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE

Winter 2027

Date: June 15, 2026

Instructor and course information:

Instructor: Dr. Pamela Block

Method of delivery: online.

Credit value: 0.5

Antirequisites: the former 2290F/G.

Prerequisites: Completion of first year and at least 0.5 credits in Social Science or Humanities.

Please ensure you have the correct requisites by checking [the Academic Calendar](#).

Course Description:

The goal of this course is to introduce you to medical anthropology, the role that anthropologists play in helping us understand global beliefs about illness and disability. We will learn about how anthropologists influence and work with systems of health, healing, wellness for policy, research, and activism. The course will include an emphasis on how health, illness, disability and healing are understood globally and cross-culturally, and will examine the relationship between biological, social and cultural understandings of these concepts.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the historically contingent social, cultural, political and economic influences on the interpretation, treatment and management of health, illness, disability and healing
- Identify the relationship between broad level social forces and their influence on individual biography and the lived experience health, illness, disability and healing.
- Recognize that ethnographic fieldwork can reveal the limitations of standard biomedical understandings and practices relevant to health, illness, disability and healing.
- Apply emerging understandings of health, illness, disability and healing to the COVID pandemic.

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course's OWL Brightspace site before the first day of class.

Course Materials:

Required textbooks:

Manderson et al. (2018) Routledge Handbook of Medical Anthropology. Routledge. The textbook costs about CA\$82. The [e-book](#) is available for free via Course Readings.

Students wishing to purchase this book must purchase these editions. Older editions will not be sufficient.

All required readings will be available through the Course Readings tool on the course site

Evaluation:

Grades will be based on the following:

Basic Contributions For those wishing a grade between Passing to 80%:

- Two posters each connecting a material culture item from your personal life to content from the course. Topics must be pre-approved. 30% x 2
- Weekly Quiz 20% (no quizzes are dropped but there is a 3-day grace period after the due date each week)
- A Zero (0) will be placed in the "Enhanced Contributions" column in the Gradebook.

For those who want grades above 80% or who are in danger of failing and seeking an improved grade:

Enhanced Contributions — For those seeking a grade above 80% work with a TA to create a plan and a rubric for this assignment by Jan 30. (20%)

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