

CARLETON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

**ANTH 5704W: ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE BODY,
HEALTH, ILLNESS, AND HEALING**

**ACADEMIC YEAR: 2025-26
TERM: WINTER**

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Method of delivery: in-person

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

ANTH 5704 [0.5 credit]

Anthropology of the Body, Health, Illness and Healing

Issues and applications in medical anthropology. How the body, health, and illness are understood and managed in the context of culture, social relations and inequalities, structural violence, political-economic forces, and global relations.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:

This course provides an overview of theory, case studies, and public health applications in medical anthropology. Using the body as a lens through which to understand culture and society, we will explore how the body itself, as well as health, illness, and healing, have been socially and culturally constituted across diverse human societies, including our own. We will begin by exploring how the body is experienced in different cultural and social contexts, including in the context of social inequalities. We will then examine the lenses through which different cultures and individuals conceptualize and manage illness and other embodied experiences (such as reproduction or death). We will consider the social dimensions of ill health, including such issues as social stigma and the symbolic and communicative dimensions of illness behavior and healing practices. These discussions will include an examination of how social and cultural experience impacts ideas about topics such as health, aging, vulnerability and risk; the prevention, causes and treatment of illness episodes; mental health; reproductive health, sexuality and childrearing; and bioethics and end-of-life care. We will also examine the political economy of health, that is, we will consider how factors such as poverty, structural violence, inequality, global relations and the profit motive impact health, well-being, illness and suffering.

REQUIRED BOOK:

Stonington, Scott

2020 *The Spirit Ambulance: Choreographing the End of Life in Thailand*. Oakland: University of California Press.

OTHER REQUIRED READINGS:

Weekly reading lists for articles and chapters are found in a second document that accompanies this one. These readings are available through the library electronic reserves (Ares) without cost and are tagged by week.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Five response papers commenting on the assigned readings: 40%
2. One class presentation of assigned readings: 10%
3. One term paper (40%) OR two critical book reviews (20% each)
4. Class participation: 10%