

Graduate-level courses

Disease, Health & Inequality

This course draws on medical anthropology, public health and development literature to examine the relationship between disease, health and inequality. The course will encourage students' critical engagement in understanding the embodiment of inequality and the larger historical, social and economic forces that shape people's health experiences globally. In particular, the course will begin with a discussion on the links between science and colonialism and subsequently move on to more contemporary debates on the inequalities of disease, suffering and infections (e.g. HIV/AIDS and Ebola), social determinants of health and illness, organ trafficking and commodification of human bodies, bioethics of global health practices and a critique of humanitarian aid and market-based medicine in the context of global health. The course will conclude with an examination of medicalized resistance to power and health as a human right.

Classes will follow a combination of lectures and seminar style discussions. Students will be expected to (1) write brief response memos based on the weekly readings, (2) Class presentations on pre-assigned readings, and (3) final project on the socio-cultural, economic and policy challenges of delivering care in a resource-poor setting. There will be no final exam. By the end of the course, students should be able to demonstrate critical understanding of global health inequities and appreciation of the contemporary challenges facing analysts and practitioners of global health.

Aging and the Life Course

This course is a graduate-level introduction to the sociological study of aging across the life course. The course will adopt an intersectional and interdisciplinary approach to examine questions of gender, the body, family, identity, social practices, medical and legal discourses surrounding aging. Specific topics include: Theorizing aging across disciplines (history, demography, economics, anthropology and feminist studies); cultural representations of age and aging (body, self-image advertising, consumer culture and ageism); family structure and intergenerational relationships (social networks, caregiving and grand parenting); later life in a transnational era (questions of identity, ethnicity, nation and transnationalism); the politics of aging; and social policy

Perspectives in Anthropology & Sociology (co-taught)

Part I: This section will provide a familiarity with anthropological theories such as functionalism, structuralism and practice theory and then examine some classic and contemporary topics in the discipline. We will particularly focus on works that examine pertinent social topics like violence, time, space, sensation, kinship, and the state from an ethnographic perspective, combining close reading of an anthropological monograph with article-length studies.

Part II: This section will examine the sociological question of inequality from varying perspectives and contributing disciplines (social anthropology, economics and sociology). In particular, this section will review debates on the structure of inequality around social institutions (family, religion, society, state) and representations (gender, race, ethnicity).