

**COURSE DATA****DATA SUBJECT**

Code: 34509
Name: Health, illness and culture
Cycle: Undergraduate Studies
ECTS Credits: 4.5
Academic year: 2025-26

STUDY (S)

Degree	Center	Acad. year	Period
1204 - Degree in Medicine	Facultat de Medicina i Odontologia	2	Second quarter

SUBJECT-MATTER

Degree	Subject-matter	Character
1204 - Degree in Medicine	Optional subjects	ELECTIVES

COORDINATION

SIMON CASTEL JOSEP

SUMMARY

This course is an introduction to the anthropology of health and medicine. It provides a contextualized perspective on health, sickness and medical practice as cultural phenomena. The aim is to understand the elements that shape health and wellness, the experience and distribution of disease, its prevention and treatment, the social relations in the diagnostic and therapeutical process, and the pluralism of medical systems. The course addresses the diversity of medical knowledge and practices in our society and in global context. Aiming at improving the doctor-patient relationship, we discuss the ideas and practices of the non-professionals of medicine, by taking into account the perspectives of patients and popular culture. Taking advantage of the various methodologies of anthropology, we analyse the practices of health, illness and care, technologies and the materiality of diagnostic and therapeutical practices, gender inequality, and the experience of emotional and mental unrest. This is also a course intending to introduce students to research.

PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE**RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE SAME DEGREE**

There are no specified enrollment restrictions with other subjects of the curriculum.



OTHER REQUIREMENTS

It is recommended to have done the subject University, health and society.

COMPETENCES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

1204 - Degree in Medicine

Acknowledge diversity and multiculturality.

Capacity for communicating with professional circles from other domains.

Consideration of ethics as a fundamental value in the professional practise.

Criticism and self-criticism skills.

Proper organisation and planning of the workload and timing in professional activities.

Recognise health determinants in population, such as genetic ones, dependent on sex, lifestyle, demographic, environmental, social, economic, psychological and cultural.

Students must be able to apply their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional manner and have acquired the competences required for the preparation and defence of arguments and for problem solving in their field of study.

Students must have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually in their field of study) to make judgements that take relevant social, scientific or ethical issues into consideration.

Team-working skills and engaging with other people in the same line of work or different.

Working capacity to function in an international context.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

1. Theory

Health, illness and culture

1. Culture and disease/illness/sickness
2. Cultural syndromes
3. Narratives of affliction



(Cultural) responses to disease

4. Medical systems
5. Medical pluralism and syncretism
6. Syndemics

The practices of health

7. The body and cultures of care
8. Nutrition and ecological crisis
9. Structural violence and chronic disease

Technology and biomedicine

10. Technomedicine and biocapitalism
11. Medical imaging, pharmacology and biotechnology
12. Surgery, rehabilitation and disability

Gender

13. Androcentrism and medicine
14. Sexuality, gender and medicine
15. Violence against women

Mental health

16. Transcultural psychiatry
17. Psychotherapy cultures
18. Migration and mental health

2. PRACTICAL

Practical teaching consists of 5 seminars dealing with a selection of the following topics:

1. Pain and affliction
2. Health and popular culture
3. Hunger and malnutrition
4. Communication and health



5. Social and racial inequality
6. Sexually transmitted diseases
7. Organ donation and transplantation
8. Gender and reproduction
9. War, ecological crisis and humanitarianism
10. Cultural competence in health

WORKLOAD

PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Tutorials	4,00
Theory	19,00
Seminar	22,00
Total hours	45,00

NON PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Attendance at other activities	0,00
Individual or group project	28,00
Independent study and work	31,50
Preparation of lessons	0,00
Preparation for assessment activities	8,00
Resolution of case studies	0,00
Total hours	67,50

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Combine theoretical classes, practical classes and seminars with regulated tutorials as follows:

A) Theoretical classes: the teacher will present the most important concepts and contents in a structured way through master classes to obtain the knowledge and skills that students must acquire. The participation of students in these classes will also be promoted by reviewing articles from the general or professional press that exemplify some aspect of the contents of the subject. All the materials will be available in the virtual classroom.

B) Seminars/Practical activities: attendance is mandatory. Practical cases will be presented exemplifying the different topics of the program. One of the issues that will be dealt with will be how to carry out a work on the ideas and practices related to health, disease, its treatment and prevention of citizens. Students will publicly present proposals for a possible work.

C) Regulated tutorials: they will consist of the personalized follow-up of the activities carried out by the



students.

The gender perspective, the respect for diversity, and the sustainable development goals (SDGs) will be incorporated into teaching, whenever possible.

EVALUATION

The final grade of the course will take into account:

- Final test: 60%
- Global report on activities: 40%
- To pass the subject, the student enrolled for the first time must attend at least to 80% of the practical activities.
- To pass the subject you must obtain a minimum of 5 points (3 of the theoretical part and 2 of the practical part) out of 10 which is the maximum.

Theoretical evaluation:

The final test is a test type with 20 multiple-choice questions. Answering wrong or incomplete answers do not subtract. When in a question all the options have not been answered correctly, it does not count as valid. Each correct question equals 0.30 points.

To pass this part the student must obtain at least 3 out of 6, which is the maximum (ten questions correctly answered)

Practical evaluation

Regarding the report of the activities carried out, the following aspects will be taken into account:

- a) Quality of the summary of each activity (25%)
- b) Its connection with the contents treated in the theoretical classes (25%)
- c) Its originality and the contribution of information obtained by the student himself (25%)
- d) Your presentation (25%)



The maximum rating in this section is 4 points. The student must obtain at least 2 points to pass the subject.

In order to access to an advance on the call of this subject, it is a requirement that the student has coursed all his/her practices.

Attendance at practical activities is mandatory. The student is considered to meet this requirement if he or she has attended a minimum of 80% of these activities and has adequately justified the impossibility of attending the remaining sessions due to the occurrence of a cause of force majeure. It will be essential to comply with this requirement to pass the subject.

Students are reminded of the importance of carrying out evaluation surveys on all the teaching staff of the degree subjects.

REFERENCES

REQUIRED:

- Lupton, Deborah (2003). *Medicine as Culture*. London: Sage Publications, 2^o ed.
- Pool, Robert; Wenzel Geissler (2005). *Medical Anthropology*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Wiley, Andrea S. (2020). *Medical Anthropology: A Biocultural Approach*. Oxford: IRL Press at Oxford University Press, 4^o ed.
- Perdiguer Gil, Enrique; Comelles Esteban, Josep (eds.) (2000). *Medicina y cultura: Estudios entre la antropología y la medicina*. Manresa: Edicions Bellaterra.
- Recursos e-Salut: ClinicalKey Student Medicina, Odontologia y Enfermería [<https://uv-es.libguides.com/RecursosSalut>] Acces Medicina [https://uv-es.libguides.com/Access_Medicina] Médica Panamericana [https://uv-es.libguides.com/Medica_Panamericana]

RECOMMENDED:

- Parkhurst, Aaron; Carroll, Timothy (eds.) (2020). *Medical Materialities: Toward a Material Culture of Medical Anthropology*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Nott, John; Harris, Anna (eds.) (2022). *Making Sense of Medicine: Material Culture and the Reproduction of Medical Knowledge*. Bristol: Intellect.
- Singer, Merrill; Erickson, Pamela I. (eds.) (2015). *A Companion to Medical Anthropology*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Singer, Merrill; Baer, Hans A.; Long, Debbi; Pavlotski, Alex (2020). *Introducing Medical Anthropology*. 3a ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Lock, Margaret; Nguyen, Vinh-Kim (2018). *An Anthropology of Biomedicine*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Good, Byron J. *Medicina, racionalidad y experiencia: Una perspectiva antropológica*. Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra, 2003.
- Martínez Hernández, Angel. *Antropología médica. Teorías sobre la cultura, el poder y la enfermedad*. Rubí: Anthropos, 2008.
- Kleinman, Arthur. *Writing at the Marginç: Discourse Between Anthropology and Medicine*.



Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

- Maio, Fernando de (2010). Health and Social Theory. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.