

Culture, Health and the Arts: Sub-Saharan Africa and the U.S.

AFS 3352

Center for African Studies/College of Medicine

Spring 2021

Location: AND0134 (location subject to change)

Course meeting times: T3, R3 & 4

Course Faculty:

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HSCLibraries

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Course Description: Explores Sub-Saharan African cultures, health issues, and belief systems related to health and the arts. Also provides a framework through which students can understand health and health care systems in other cultures.

Pre-Requisites: Junior standing or 6 credits minimum from AFH 2003, AFS 2002, AFS 4905, AFS 4935, HUM 2420 or HUM 2424.

Course Objectives:

1. To develop an introductory understanding of health issues, history, culture and trends in Sub-Saharan Africa
2. To develop an understanding of and respect for diverse and unfamiliar cultural belief systems related to health and healing
3. To develop an introductory understanding of the roles of the arts and humanities in every day life and traditional healing practices in Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as in healthcare in the US
4. To develop a familiarity with communication regarding health issues with people from non-western cultures

Course Structure:

Culture, Health and the Arts in Sub-Saharan Africa and the U.S. will include

1. Lectures by primary and guest faculty
2. Class trips to Harn Museum- for guided tour and for Museum Nights (dates TBA)
3. Readings and film viewing
4. An independent project
5. Participatory discussions and arts activities
6. Writing assignments

Assignments:

1. Project: Each student will undertake a project of his or her design within one of the following structures:

- a. *Experiential/Clinical Practice Project* – volunteer with AIM or apply the arts in another community/health related setting. This should include a minimum of 10 documented hours of experiential work. A 4-5 page reflective essay (may include journal entries) and a final visual presentation will provide an overview of the experience from start to finish. The essay and reflection also should consider topics raised in the current literature, a minimum of 5 sources.
- b. *Reflective Project* – This project represents an opportunity for you to critically explore a past experience with the belief system of another culture or with the arts and health, or to design a creative structure within which you can explore your personal creative process in relation to your health. If the experience you explored is in the past, you will be expected to invest substantial effort in major reconsideration of and reflection on this experience. This project will culminate in a 4-5 page written paper grounded in the current literature including citations and a visual presentation such as a power point presentation. If you are exploring an issue related to your health, you may opt instead to write an 8-10 page paper which includes significant consideration of current literature. A minimum of 10 sources is required for this work.
- c. *Academic Research Project* – Select a topic related to the course, conduct a review of the literature and write a concise 8-10 page paper including an annotated bibliography with a minimum of 10 entries (75-100 words each)

2. Book Reviews: You will review two books over the course of the semester. You may choose any two of the assigned readings to review and will submit each review on or ahead of the designated due date. Your 2-3 page review should include:

- a. information about the author(s) such as his/her qualifications, experience, objectives, etc. This section may require additional research and should be no more than a single brief paragraph.
- b. a concise summary of the book including the central or most meaningful points. You may include examples or quotes.
- c. your personal critique of the book and its relevance to your learning related to the course. Your response in this part of the essay should constitute the bulk of the paper.

3. Reflective Essays: You will write two 2-3 page reflective essays discussing your thoughts and reactions to material considered in the course. See the attachment to this syllabus for a list of possible essay questions. If you would prefer to write on a topic of your choosing, you may e-mail the instructors for approval in advance. A reflective essay has an informal, narrative tone and presents your personal experience as relevant,

but is “academic” in the sense that you are demonstrating what you learned and how you have incorporated that learning into your life and academic and personal objectives.

4. Course-related Community events: The UF and Gainesville communities host an array of exciting events related to African culture. You will be required to choose and attend two such community events. A list of events will be posted on the course’s e-learning site and the instructors may approve additional events. Your attendance must be documented by a written paragraph describing the event and what you gained from it. These papers must be submitted within one week of attendance. Events can be performances at the Philips Center or other concerts! The Center for African Studies has weekly (more or less) lectures as well as other events.

Required reading for Culture, Health and the Arts in SubSaharan Africa and the US.

Dettwyler, K. (1994). *Dancing skeletons: Life and death in West Africa*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Janzen, J. M., & Feierman, S. (Eds.). (1992). *The social basis of health and healing in Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Chapters- Intro, 1, 5,8, 14, 15,17

McNeill, W. H. (1998). *Plagues and peoples*. New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday.

Mwangi, M. (2000). *The last plague*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

Nolen, Stephanie. (2008) 28 Stories of AIDS in Africa.

Vasiljevic, D., Shapiro, H., & Selin, H. (Eds.). (2003). *Medicine across cultures: History and practice of medicine in non-western cultures*. Dordrecht; Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers. [Ebook available online for UF students- read chapter [Continuity, Change, and Challenge in African Medicine](#)]

Also various websites and journal article that will be listed on the course website.

Grading:

Students will be graded on the following criteria:

1. Participation in class and web-cast discussions (30 points)
2. Project (30 points)
3. 2 Book Reviews (10 points each- 20 points total)
4. 2 Reflective Essays (5 points each- 10 points total)
5. 2 course-related community events (10 points each- 10 points)

Grade scale for class points awarded:

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62

Below 60 constitutes a failing grade.

Attendance: Attendance in this very experiential course is mandatory. Two absences will be allowed without a deduction of points; every absence beyond two will result in a reduction of three points from the final grade. Two additional absences documented by a doctor's note can be made up through attendance of pre-approved course-related community events.

Late and Missed Work: A passing grade in the class is dependent upon completion of all work. Thus there is no allowance made for missed assignments. Work may be submitted late with permission from the instructor and points will be subtracted at the rate of one point per day unless other arrangements have been made.

Spontaneity clause: Due to the experiential nature of this course, the instructors may alter this syllabus as needed to accommodate class pace, interests, and/or special challenges or opportunities that may arise.

Academic Honesty: All students sign the following statement upon registration at the University of Florida: "I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University." As instructors for this course, we fully support the intent of the above statement and will not tolerate academic dishonesty.

Student Responsibility: Students are responsible for understanding all course policies and for accessing all course materials on the UF E-Learning Website through the URL listed above. All assignments should be submitted through the website and in hard copy when requested. Students are also responsible for checking their UF e-mail account for course notifications and for communicating with the instructors related to any situation that may hinder his or her progress or participation in the course.

Diversity and Inclusion Statement: We intend this course to be helpful and engaging for students of all diverse backgrounds and perspectives and that your learning needs are served in and out of class. It is our intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: age, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, nationality, race, religion, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated and can be submitted anonymously at any time through this survey <https://bit.ly/2MiVME7>

It is our goal to make all class materials and assignments accessible to everyone, using the principles of universal design for learning. In addition, if you require specific academic accommodations, please avail yourself of the resources of the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/>, 352-392-8565) and discuss this with us as soon as possible in the semester.

Accommodations for students with disabilities: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Questions for Reflective Essays (choose two):

How has your understanding of the relationship between disease and history changed since participating in class lectures and discussions? How can disease shape culture and history- and vice versa? (Note you might want to consider this question in one of several ways 1. Long term- ie McNeill 2. Recent term- ie impact of HIV/AIDS on African societies)

How do different understandings of disease- what constitutes a disease, and what a disease might mean- affect the way that people seek health care, such as the type of care they might choose, what treatments they prefer, how they view the person who has dis-ease?

How do different understandings of disease affect the treatment of citizens- not necessarily from health care providers but from other members of society- in both positive and negative ways (Be sure to define what YOU mean by positive and negative)?

How can a health care provider incorporate knowledge of diverse cultural belief systems, histories, and healing practices into his/her practice in the United States?

What are some of the different approaches that international aid organizations can use in their attempts to improve health in the developing world, and which do you think is most effective (define what YOU mean by effective)?

How has your understanding of the sub-Saharan African portion of the continent- as a massive land area with diverse cultures- changed? How does this affect your approach to aid and development in Africa?

In your mind, what would be an ideal melding of traditional and modern approaches to healthcare? Would this differ for different African nations? What about a system in the United States?

How have the arts functioned in healthcare in traditional African societies? Do you see this function as significantly different from the United States? Why or why not?

What role do arts play in healing, in your estimation? How have your ideas about this role changed (or not) over the course of the semester?

How would you create an art in medicine program for a hospital in rural South Africa? What considerations would be important?

Please note: **Schedule is subject to change**. Course meets Tuesday, Periods 3 and Thursday, Period 3 and 4 in AND 0134 (location subject to change). Section 1 of the material focuses on an introduction to ideas about disease and its impact on societies, with a focus on Africa, on a brief and general look at the great diversity of SubSaharan African cultures, and a general look at health systems. Section 2 looks at more general information on the role of art in healing and health systems (and a little on the biology of creativity and its impact on the CNS). Section 3 looks more specifically at the role arts played and play in changing health systems (with a quick look at how they have been used in health outreach).

WEEK

Date	Topic	Speaker	Reading: please note that reading should be done by the day listed in the schedule and we will discuss on that day.
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WEEK I

Tuesday 1/12	Intro to class		
Thursday 1/14	Section 1: Health and Culture in Sub-Saharan African- History of Health & Global Health Issues- impact of disease on history and culture.		Reading: <i>Plagues and Peoples</i> by William McNeill- Intro & Ch I Ch II recommended

WEEK II

Tuesday 1/19	Section 1: Sub-Saharan Africa History & Culture- an overview		
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Thursday 1/21	Section 1: "Traditional" African Health Systems Discuss/wrap up <i>Plagues and Peoples</i> .		Read <i>Plagues and Peoples</i> Chs II, V, VI
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WEEK III

Tuesday 1/26	Section 1: "Traditional" African Health Systems		
Thursday 1/28	Section 1: "Traditional" and changing African Health Systems -		Discuss articles on Herbal medicine/traditional medicine and concepts of healing

WEEK IV

Tuesday 2/2	Section 2: Arts and Healing and healthcare generally		
Thursday 2/4	Section 2: Neurology and Creativity		Discuss <i>Dancing Skeletons</i>

WEEK V

Tuesday 2/9	Section 2: Exploring arts and healing		
Thursday 2/11	Section 2: Music and healing		First book/reading review due (<i>Plagues and peoples</i> or <i>Dancing Skeletons</i>) (there will be an assignment on the class page for submitting each of these) Attend the virtual Harn Museum Museum Nights starting at 6PM

WEEK VI

Tuesday 2/16	Section 3: “Traditional” and changing African Health Systems		Janzen Intro, ch 1, 5, 8, 14 Discuss “Hunting the ethical state” by Joseph Hellweg- chapter handout
Thursday 2/18	Section 3: “Traditional” and changing African Health Systems- changing health patterns due to imperial rule		Discuss chapter in Ebook- Medicine across cultures]

WEEK VII

Tuesday 2/23	Section 3: Literature and health in Sub- Saharan Africa		Discuss: <i>The Last Plague</i> by Meja Mwangi
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WEEK VIII

Tuesday 3/2	Section 3: Music and healing		Submit first reflective essay
Thursday 3/4	Section 3: International outreach and health		Discuss movie <i>The Last King of Scotland</i> (available through UF library)

WEEK IX

Tuesday 3/9	Section 3: AIDS in Africa		
Thursday 3/11	Section 3: Investigating AIDS in Africa		Discuss movie <i>State of Denial</i> (available through UF library) and <i>A Closer Walk</i>

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WEEK X

Tuesday 3/16	Section 3: HIV/AIDS- the response		Discuss movie <i>Yesterday</i>
Thursday 3/18	Section 3: HIV/AIDS- the response		Second book/reading review due (Book of your choice)

WEEK XI

Tuesday 3/23	Section 3: Looking at African art and its role in health/healing		Interaction with the Harn Museum of Art
Thursday 3/25	Section 3: Looking at African art and its role in health/healing		Interaction with the Harn Museum of Art and other programs- this week will include a trip to the museum. The form of this trip will depend on current health situations. More to follow.

WEEK XII

Tuesday 3/30	Section 3: Arts and the response to FGC: what is FGC		
Thursday 4/1	Section 3: Arts and the response to FGC		Discussion of movie <i>Moolaade</i>

WEEK XIII

Tuesday 4/6	Section 3: Mental health and the response in SubSaharan Africa		
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Thursday 4/8	Section 3: Mental health and the arts in SubSaharan Africa		Complete: Project description, and 1 Reflective Essay
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WEEK XIV

Tuesday 4/13	Section 3: Health systems and the arts in modern Sub-Saharan Africa		Submit second reflective essay
Thursday 4/15	Section 3: Health systems and the arts in modern Sub-Saharan Africa		

WEEK XV

Tuesday 4/20	Section 3: Modern African approaches to medical arts and humanities		Submit project
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