

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Fall 2009

Health, Disease, and Healing in Africa

Over the past two decades or so, scholars have developed a complex literature on practices of health and healing in Africa. This course examines why the topic of health and healing occupies such a central role in our understanding of Africa's pasts and presents. It explores the creative and shifting ways in which Africans have sought to compose healthy communities through the expansion of therapeutic repertoires. Our readings will vary from straightforward to very challenging and include works drawn mainly from the disciplines of anthropology and history. This is a seminar-style reading course and is cross-listed with African Languages and Literature, Anthropology, Economics, Geography, History, and Political Science.

Neil Kodesh
Department of History
kodesh@wisc.edu
office hours: M 1-2:30

5115 Humanities

Claire Wendland
Department of Anthropology
cwendland@wisc.edu
office hours: W 3:45-5:45 or M/W
by appointment

4231 Sewell Social Science Bldg.

Required Readings:

Several required articles or book chapters are listed on the date by which they should be read, below. All articles have been placed on reserve (electronically and in hard copy) through the Social Science Reference Library. The following books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore, and have also been placed on reserve at College Library:

John Janzen, *The Quest for Therapy: Medical Pluralism in Lower Zaire*

Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo*

Lynn Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya*

Julie Livingston, *Debility and the Moral Imagination in Botswana*

Caroline Bledsoe, *Contingent Lives: Fertility, Time, and Aging in West Africa*

Adam Ashforth, *Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa*.

Robert Thornton, *Unimagined Community: Sex, Networks, and AIDS in Uganda and South Africa*

Harry West, *Kupilikula: Governance and the Invisible Realm in Mozambique*

ASSIGNMENTS

- a) Book reviews: Students will write two book reviews over the course of the semester. These reviews should be no longer than 1000 words. You may choose the books you would like to review from any of the assigned texts; the first review should be of a book discussed in weeks 1-7, and the second should be of a book discussed during weeks 8-14. Rather than merely summarizing the book, your reviews should engage the text at hand by raising critical questions about the methods, theories, and conclusions put forward by its author. In other words, you should critically assess and analyze the contents of the book and discuss their significance. What contribution do you feel the book makes to the field, how does it do so, and by what methodology? What are the author's outstanding contributions? What are the shortfalls of the book? You are encouraged to consult the book review sections in *The Journal of African History*, *The American Historical Review*, *Current Anthropology*, and *American Anthropologist* for guidance. Your reviews will be due in class during the week we discuss the book you have chosen to evaluate.
- b) Critical analysis paper: students will be expected to write a critical analysis paper drawing on relevant readings (including but not limited to readings from this course). You may choose to respond to any one of the following questions:
- Given the proliferation of literature on health and healing in Africa and the focus in contemporary scholarship on the effects of disease on African populations, how far removed from the 19th-century vision of Africa as the diseased continent is today's vision?
 - Whereas Africanists once analyzed responses to misfortune in terms of religion, many scholars and African people themselves now conceptualize their modes of dealing with misfortune as medicine and situate their analyses within the realm of health and healing. Discuss the implications of this shift in perspective.
 - In his pathbreaking essay "Struggles for Control: The Social Roots of Health and Healing in Modern Africa," Steven Feierman argues that "the history of health care is inseparable from the total history of communal organization and of the economy" (p.73). Assess this statement in light of the proliferation in literature on health and healing since the publication of Feierman's essay.

- Theorists in recent years have often used bodily experience, as Livingston does, as a useful lens through which to analyze the “moral imagination.” What are the strengths and limitations inherent in such approaches?

Each student should peer review the critical analysis paper with at least one other classmate before turning it in. Papers are to be ten pages in length plus a bibliography, and are due the last week of class.

- c) Class participation: Weekly discussions of the assigned readings are a crucial component of the seminar. You should come to class prepared to share your thoughts on the assigned readings and to actively participate in discussion. Each week, two class members will be assigned to facilitate the discussion. The discussion leaders, who should coordinate ahead of time, will make a short (10 minutes maximum) presentation at the beginning of the class. Each class member will facilitate discussion twice during the semester.

EVALUATION

Grades

- 30% prepared participation, including leadership of class discussion
30% book reviews (15% each)
40% critical analysis paper

Academic Honesty

In keeping with the policy of this university, plagiarism (using other people’s thoughts or words without acknowledging the source) is unacceptable. *All sources, including internet sources, MUST be cited in your written work.* A first offense will result in a report submitted to the Dean of Students and a failing grade on the paper in question.

Knowing how or when to cite can be confusing; if you are having trouble, rather than living in fear of inadvertent plagiarism please come discuss it with either of us during office hours, or seek advice from the writing center. You may also find the following link helpful: www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html.

Late Policy

Papers are due by the end of class on the date due. No late papers will be accepted. Please submit one hard copy in class, and an identical electronic copy by email to both professors.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

9/2 **Week 1.** **Introduction to course**

9/9 **Week 2.** **What is health, what is healing? Defining a field of inquiry**

Reading: Steven Feierman, "Struggles for Control: The Social Roots of Health and Healing in Modern Africa," *African Studies Review* 28:2/3 (1985): 73-147.

Gwyn Prins, "But What Was the Disease? The Present State of Health and Healing in African Studies," *Past and Present* 124 (1989): 159-179.

Shula Marks, "What is Colonial about Colonial Medicine? And What has Happened to Imperialism and Health?," *Social History of Medicine* 10:2 (1997): 205-219.

Maureen Malowany, "Unfinished Agendas: Writing the History of Medicine of Sub-Saharan Africa," *African Affairs* 99 (2000): 325-349.

Susan Whyte, "Anthropological Approaches to African Misfortune, from Religion to Medicine," in Anita Jacobsen-Widding and David Westerlund (eds.), *Culture, Experience, and Pluralism: Essays on African Ideas of Illness and Healing*, pp. 289-301 (Coronet Books, 1989).

Steven Feierman, "Explaining Uncertainty in the Medical World of Ghaambo," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 74 (2000): 317-344.

Neil Kodesh, "Networks of Knowledge: Clanship and Collective Well-Being in Buganda," *The Journal of African History* 49:2 (2008): 197-216.

9/16 Week 3. Missionaries, Medicine, and Colonialism

Reading: Megan Vaughan, "The Great Dispensary in the Sky: Mission Medicine," in Megan Vaughan, *Curing their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness*, pp. 55-76 (Stanford University Press, 1991).

Paul Landau, "Explaining Surgical Evangelism in Colonial Southern Africa: Teeth, Pain and Faith," *Journal of African History* 37:2 (1996), 261-281.

Luise White, "They Could Make their Victims Dull: Genders and Genres, Fantasies and Cures in Colonial Southern Uganda," *American Historical Review* 100:5 (1995), 1379-1402.

Terence Ranger, "Godly Medicine: The Ambiguities of Medical Mission in Southeastern Tanzania, 1900-1945," in Steven Feierman and John Janzen (eds.), *The Social Basis of Health and Healing in Africa.*, pp. 256-282 (University of California Press, 1992).

9/23 Week 4. Medical Pluralism

Reading: John Janzen, *The Quest for Therapy: Medical Pluralism in Lower Zaire* (University of California Press, 1978).

9/30 Week 5. The Medicalization of Childbirth in Colonial Africa

Reading: Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo* (Duke University Press, 1999).

10/7 Week 6. Politics of Reproduction

Reading: Lynn Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (University of California Press, 2003).

10/14 Week 7. Debility and Bodily Misfortune

Reading: Julie Livingston, *Debility and the Moral Imagination in Botswana* (University of Indiana Press, 2005)

10/21 Week 8. Contraception Across Cultures

Reading: Caroline Bledsoe, *Contingent Lives: Fertility, Time, and Aging in West Africa* (University of Chicago Press, 2002).

10/28 Week 9. Violence

Reading: Adam Ashforth, *Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa* (University of Chicago Press, 2005).

11/4 Week 10. AIDS

Reading: Robert Thornton, *Unimagined Community: Sex, Networks, and AIDS in Uganda and South Africa* (University of California Press, 2008)

11/11 Week 11. Mchape '95

Readings: Matthew Schoffeleers, "The AIDS Pandemic, The Prophet Billy Chisupe, and the Democratization Process in Malawi," *Journal of Religion in Africa* XXIX:4 (1999), 404-441.

Peter Probst, "Mchape '95, Or, The Sudden Fame Of Billy Goodson Chisupe: Healing, Social Memory And The Enigma Of The Public Sphere In Post-Banda Malawi," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 69: 1 (1999): 108-37.

Marissa C.M. Doran, "Reconstructing Mchape '95: AIDS, Billy Chisupe, and the Politics of Persuasion," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1:3 (2007): 397-416.

11/18 Week 12. Healing and Power Revisited

Readings: Harry West, *Kupilikula: Governance and the Invisible Realm in Mozambique* (University of Chicago Press, 2005).

11/25 Week 13. Global Health Projects

Readings: James Pfeiffer, "International NGOs and Primary Health Care in Mozambique: The Need for a New Model of Collaboration," *Social Science and Medicine* 56:4 (2003): 725-738.

Firoze Manji and Carl O'Coill, "The missionary position: NGOs and development in Africa," *International Affairs* 78:3 (2002): 567-83

Vinh-Kim Nguyen, "Antiretroviral globalism, biopolitics, and therapeutic citizenship," in Aihwa Ong and Stephen J. Collier (eds.) *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, pp. 124-44, Oxford: Blackwell (2005).

Claire Wendland, "Research, therapy, and bioethical hegemony: the controversy over perinatal HIV research in Africa," *African Studies Review* 51:3 (2008): 1-23

P. Wenzel Geissler, Ann Kelly, Babatunde Imoukhuede, and Robert Pool. 2008. "'He is now like a brother, I can even give him some blood'—relational ethics and material exchanges in a malaria vaccine 'trial community' in The Gambia," *Social Science and Medicine* 67:5 (2008): 696-707

12/2 Week 14. Work on Critical Analysis Papers

12/9 Week 15. Wrap Up

critical analysis paper due in class