**Health and Health Care in Africa**

Independent study with Jasmaine Quashie  
Spring 2018

**Professor Cati Coe**405-407 Cooper Street, Room 203  
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**Meetings:** Alternate Thursdays, 3:30-5:00pm in Professor Coe’s office

**Course Description**This course is a reading course on the anthropology of health and healing in Africa, with a focus on healthcare systems. It introduces the pluralism of African healing, in which biomedicine is only one option for people suffering, alongside spiritual explanations and herbal medicine. Issues of knowledge, science and ethics are at stake in questions of diagnosis of sickness and suffering and in strategies to pursue healing.

**Schedule of Readings**

**January 18th**Professor Coe gives a brief overview on health and health care in Africa and introduces the course material.

Key concepts:

* Biomedicine/traditional medicine
* Medicalization
* Stratified reproduction
* Study of science as knowledge construction
* The state, the market and NGOs in a neo-liberal environment
* Biopolitics and necropolitics
* Structural violence

**Orienting Concepts: January 25th**Readings (provided by Professor Coe):   
1) Excerpt from E. E. Evans-Pritchard. *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976, pp. 250-256.

2) Paul Farmer. “On Suffering and Structural Violence: Social and Economic Rights in the Global Era.” In *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003, pp. 29-50.

3) Steven Feierman and John M. Janzen. “Introduction.” In *The Social Basis of Health and Healing in Africa.* Edited by Feierman and Janzen. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1-19.

4) Film: “Healers of Ghana” (1996) by J. Scott Dodds, Harold L. Cannon, and Edward Quarshie (58 minutes)

**February 8th**  
**Medical Pluralism: The View from Uganda**Reading: Susan Reynolds Whyte, *Questioning Misfortune: The Pragmatics of Uncertainty in Eastern Uganda*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

**February 22nd   
Health Inequalities and Crumbling Health Systems: The View from Senegal**Reading: Ellen E. Foley. *Your Pocket is What Cures You: The Politics of Health in Senegal*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010.

**March 8th  
Who Deserves Care? The View from Côte d’Ivoire**Reading: Vinh-Kim Nguyen. *The Republic of Therapy: Triage and Sovereignty in West Africa’s Time of AIDS*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010. [This reading may be quite difficult, but do your best to understand what you can, and we will discuss it. It introduces complex topics which are very useful for thinking through health and medical issues.]

**March 29th  
The Practice and Training of Western Bio-Medicine: The View from Malawi**Reading: Claire L. Wendland. *A Heart for the Work: Journeys through an African Medical School.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

**April 12th  
Medical Care in the Context of Chronic Diseases: The View from Botswana**Reading: Julie Livingston. *Debility and the Moral Imagination in Botswana*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.

**April 26th**  
Final paper due.

**Assignments**

**Papers on the Readings**  
You should write a paper on your thoughts and reflections about the assigned reading in preparation for our discussion. The paper is due at the time of our meeting to discuss the assigned reading. The paper should be 4-5 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point font, and with one-inch margins. The first paragraph of your paper should summarize the book’s argument and major themes. In your paper, you might consider the following questions, although you do not have to answer them all. You might choose three or four that are the most relevant for the reading.

* What is the empirical basis for the assertions provided?
* What are the implications of the argument of the book?
* What did you learn about health, healing and health systems in Africa from this book?
* What are some of the inequalities produced by gender, age, or other relevant social category on healthcare provision and why does it do so?
* What are some of the assumptions behind different healing beliefs and practices? How is knowledge tested?
* What kinds of knowledge or skills or resources are necessary to obtain or provide health care? How is this knowledge/skill/resource obtained or learned?
* How does the book relate to other reading(s) in this course or elsewhere? Does it support other readings, or contradict what you have read before in some way?
* What questions do you have after reading this book?
* What in your personal experience relates to what the book discusses or describes?

There will be six papers in all, each worth 10% of your final grade.

**Final Paper, due April 26th**  
The final paper should synthesize all the readings and consider their implications for health policy and practice. After an executive summary of 500 words, in which you summarize the major conclusions of your paper, you should provide a brief introduction, and then formulate five or so recommendations for health policy and practice in Africa, drawing your rationale from the readings. Be sure that you address all the readings in the course.

The final paper should be 8-10 pages long, double-spaced, in 12-point font, and with one-inch margins. It is worth 30% of your final grade.

**Attendance and Participation**  
Regular attendance and contribution to the discussion of the readings is expected and is worth another 10% of your grade. Please inform me by phone or email as soon as you know that you will be unable to make a class session.