

Topics in Anthropology: Human/Animal Disease Transfer

ANTH 4040 / BIOL 4000

Time: MW 2:30 pm – 3:45 pm

Location: Denny 106

Instructor: Dr. Lydia E. O. Light

Office: Barnard 215

Email: llight1@charlotte.edu

Office Hours: MW 1-2 pm – also available through Zoom



COURSE DESCRIPTION

Zoonoses are infectious diseases that are transferred between humans and animals. Regardless of whether they begin within animals and transfer to humans or begin in humans and transfer to animals, they have the capacity to produce large-scale human suffering. This course will examine the processes that are involved in human-animal disease transfer with particular attention paid to the complex ways in which culture and health articulate to further the spread of these diseases both today and in our human past. We will also incorporate lessons learned from medical anthropology and applied anthropology to conceptualize realistic, structurally-informed solutions that can serve to lessen the spread of these diseases or help find ways to cope with the aftermath.

COURSE UNITS

Unit One: This unit will provide students with an overview of the biological processes involved with zoonotic diseases. While brief, this overview will cover various types of pathogens as well as the requirements for infection. You will also learn about disciplinary approaches to understanding zoonotic disease transmission and public health.

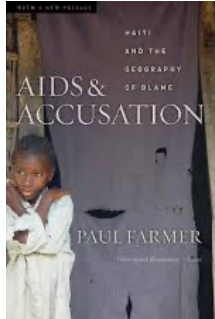
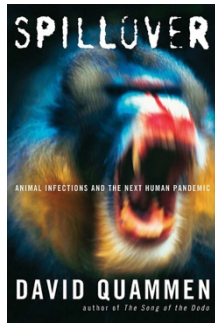
Unit Two: During this unit, you will be introduced to the biological and social factors involved in several diseases including influenza, plague, tuberculosis, Ebola virus, Zika, SARS, malaria, and more.

Unit Three: The final unit will explore anthropological concepts and their role in zoonotic diseases both past and present, including the effects of culturally prescribed settlement patterns, caring for the ill or dead, and perceptions of health and disease.

****Statement on Social Justice: As anthropologists, we are committed to making the world safe for human differences, and to serving students of all identities and from all backgrounds. As a part of that, this class is explicitly anti-racist. I will not tolerate racist and discriminatory language and beliefs.

****Statement on Gender Equality: This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If your name is different than what is indicated on the class roster, please let me know. Please correct me on your gender pronoun if I make a mistake.

REQUIRED MATERIALS



Spillover

2012

By David Quammen

ISBN-13: 978-0393066807

AIDS & Accusation

2006

By Paul Farmer

ISBN013: 978-0520248397

(These texts can be rented or purchased in any format, new or used)

Additional readings will be assigned as needed and will be posted on the Canvas page. Students will also need to find additional sources for the final paper.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All of you are expected to take responsibility for your learning in this course. This includes attending class, completing assigned readings, participating in small group and class discussions, turning in all assignments on time, and keeping up to date on all information presented via Canvas.

All students are encouraged to visit me during my office hours for assistance. Unanticipated factors such as time constraints and accessibility of reading material may influence the planned topics and schedule. All changes in course content and schedule will be announced as far in advance as is feasible.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

My approach to teaching focuses on the power of experiential knowledge and I include as many opportunities for my students to emotionally engage with the material presented. While certain aspects of the course are most effectively taught through lectures, I use a variety of active learning techniques, primarily small group discussion and peer learning. I also feel that students in my courses should be gaining skills that apply to other courses and professionalism in general.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

This class will be held in-person and will include lectures, discussions, and group activities. All of you are expected to take responsibility for your learning in this course. This includes attending class regularly, completing assigned readings, participating in small group and class discussions, turning in all assignments on time, working with classmates on group activities, and keeping up to date on all information presented via Canvas.

GRADING

This course will be embracing the “ungrading” policy that has been developed recently (see the [recent edited volume by Drs. Alfie Kohn and Susan Blum here](#)). This **DOES NOT MEAN** that you do not have work to complete this course. What it does mean is that when you complete an assignment, you will receive full credit and *extensive* feedback from me and you are expected to read that feedback and *implement it for future assignments*. At midterm and at the end of the semester, you will be asked to tell me what grade (A, B, C, D, or F) you think you deserve and to justify that assessment in relation to your performance throughout the course. While I will ultimately be responsible for assigning your final grade, I will rely mostly on your self-assessments.

Coursework will include the following:

EXAM: There will be **one exam** at the conclusion of the first unit. This exam will include multiple-choice, true-false, and matching questions.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: There are three different types of written assignments for this class:

- **READING SUMMARIES:** Frequent, lengthy readings will be required for this course. You will complete brief reading summaries at the start of each class.
- **VIDEO RESPONSE PAPERS:** Throughout the semester, I will be showing three videos that help clarify or expand on topics covered in class. The videos do NOT serve to fill empty time but should instead be considered valuable learning material. Video response papers are due **before the next discussion class**. The papers give you a chance to engage with the material and also receive feedback on your writing. Instructions for completing the video response papers will be posted on Canvas.
- **FINAL PAPER:** You will complete a long-format (8-10 pages, double-spaced) research paper during the final unit. These papers will cover anthropological perspectives on a zoonosis of your choice. Paper topics and preliminary reference lists must be submitted on Canvas for approval by the instructor. Details will be provided on Canvas.

ATTENDANCE: You are all expected to attend class regularly and participate in all class activities. Missing class often, arriving late, leaving early, and choosing not to participate will be noted by the instructor and TA. **If you miss more than three classes** without a university-approved or self-assessed letter grade will be **reduced by one full letter grade**. Every three additional absences will result in additional letter-grade deductions. Therefore, if you must miss class for a university-approved reason, please contact me beforehand or within 24 hours of missing class (or within 24 hours of being capable of contacting me).

LATE WORK, GRADE DISPUTES, AND AI POLICIES

Late work will be accepted for **ten calendar days** (weekend days “count”) for all assignments before the assignment will close for submissions on Canvas. However, as assignments have been scaffolded to allow for time for revisions, ***falling behind on***

your coursework may have serious academic consequences. You should consider your ability to turn assignments in on time when completing your self-assessments. If you feel I have made a grade recording error, you **MUST** contact me to discuss the issue within **2 weeks** of when the grade is posted on Canvas or by the last day of class if during the final two weeks of the semester. Any disputes brought to my attention after that point will not be addressed as you are responsible for monitoring your grades. All work submitted for this class needs to be your own original work (either individual work or group work as described in the course materials). This means that work should **NOT** be created using generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT), purchased from people or companies, or obtained from any individual other than yourself.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

My classroom is a place where open-minded, independent thinking is encouraged, even when that classroom exists in an online reality. To facilitate this environment, all students are expected to act with respect and maturity towards their fellow students, the instructor, the teaching assistants, and any visiting speakers. Some of the material covered in class may be perceived as controversial. Please remain respectful of your classmates (and instructors) during discussions of such nature. Each of us may have strongly differing opinions on the various topics of class discussions. The orderly questioning of the ideas of others, including mine, is similarly welcome. However, I will manage the discussions so that ideas and argument can proceed in an orderly fashion.

You should expect that if your conduct during class discussions seriously disrupts the atmosphere of mutual respect I expect in this class, you will not be permitted to participate further and may subsequently lose opportunities to complete course activities. If you act disrespectfully towards anyone in the class in any manner (this includes racist, bigoted, sexist, ableist, homophobic, transphobic, and other disrespectful comments *and actions*), I will first ask you to not do so again. If it continues, you will need to leave class for that day. If it happens a third time, I will contact the Dean of Students to discuss removing you from the course entirely, likely resulting in you failing the course.

POLICY ON VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM

Academia is not structured in a way that is conducive to the multi-faceted lives of our student body here at UNC Charlotte and elsewhere throughout the country. Due to these structural limitations, I explicitly welcome guests in the classroom in the event that other arrangements cannot be made. This includes breastfeeding infants, school-aged children with school holidays, young children for whom regular childcare is temporarily not available, older individuals under your care, and any other reasonable situation. If you plan to bring a guest to class, please consider the nature of the material to be covered in class that day as many of our course discussions will include mature topics.

COMMUNICATION POLICY

I try to be available to students as much as possible. In addition to being available during office hours, feel free to email me at l1ght1@charlotte.edu with questions. I will respond

to emails within 24 hours, but usually much sooner. However, if there is no question in the email that needs to be answered or the question is explicitly stated here in the syllabus, I will not respond to the email.

ON CAMPUS RESOURCES

Jamil Niner Student Pantry (JNSP): Food insecurity is defined by the USDA as “a lack of access to enough food for an active, healthy life.” Food insecure categories include: reduced caloric intake, reduced food quality, lack of variety in diet, disrupted eating patterns, and hunger. Research shows that college students experience food insecurity at higher rates than the American household rate, and that food insecurity can negatively impact academic performance and persistence. In recognition of this problem, UNC Charlotte offers assistance to students facing food insecurity through an on-campus food pantry. The JNSP is located on the east edge of campus at 1224 John Kirk Road. It has regular hours which may change from semester to semester; please see the website at <https://ninerpantry.charlotte.edu/> for schedule and details on its services, as well as resources about hunger and food insecurity among college students.

Title IX Reporting Policy: UNC Charlotte is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these incidents, know that you are not alone. UNC Charlotte has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. Please be aware that many UNC Charlotte employees, including all faculty members, are considered [Responsible Employees](#) who are required to relay any information or reports of sexual misconduct they receive to the Title IX Coordinator. This means that if you tell me about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I must report the information to the Title IX Coordinator. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can contact any of the following on-campus resources, who are not required to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator: (1) [University Counseling Center](#) (7-0311); or (2) [Student Health Center](#) (7-7400); or (3) Department of Athletics psychologist. Additional information about your options is available at titleix.uncc.edu under the “Students” tab.

Academic Assistance & Accommodations: I encourage all of my students to seek out additional assistance if they are concerned about their academic performance (and even if they are not). I am always available to meet with students either during my office hours or by appointment. In addition, the university provides a number of services designed to help students excel academically. Students in this course seeking accommodations to disabilities must first consult with the [Office of Disability Services](#) and follow the instructions of that office for obtaining accommodations.

Topics in Anthropology: Human/Animal Disease Transfer – Fall 2024

Scholastic Dishonesty: While I recognize that adjusting to college academics can be a challenging time, I do not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty in my class. I will not tolerate any attempts to manipulate grading opportunities or misappropriate credit for work done and will penalize any student violating the university policies on scholastic dishonesty. I reserve the right to ask students to demonstrate that graded assignments completed outside of class are their own work. All students are required to read and abide by the [Code of Student Academic Integrity](#). Violations of the Code of Student Academic Integrity, including plagiarism, will result in disciplinary action as provided in the Code. Definitions and examples of plagiarism are set forth in the Code.

Ethical Learning Expectations: All students and instructors are expected to engage with each other respectfully. Unwelcome conduct directed toward another person based upon that person's actual or perceived race, actual or perceived gender, religion, age, national origin, ethnicity, disability, or veteran status, or for any other reason, may constitute a violation of University Policy 406, [The Code of Student Responsibility](#). Any student suspected of engaging in such conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. All students are required to abide by the [UNC Charlotte Sexual Harassment Policy](#) and the policy on [Responsible Use of University Computing and Electronic Communication Resources](#). Sexual harassment, as defined in the UNC Charlotte Sexual Harassment Policy, is prohibited, even when carried out through computers or other electronic communications systems, including course-based chat rooms or message boards.

REVISIONS POLICY

The standards and requirements set forth in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the course instructor. Notice of such changes will be by announcement in class or by changes to this syllabus posted on the course in Canvas.

*****This syllabus contains the policies and expectations I have established for the Topics in Anthropology: Human/Animal Disease Transfer course. Please read the entire syllabus carefully before continuing in this course. These policies and expectations are intended to create a productive learning atmosphere for all students. Unless you are prepared to abide by these policies and expectations, you risk losing the opportunity to participate further in the course.

Topics in Anthropology: Human/Animal Disease Transfer – Fall 2024

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE – SUBJECT TO CHANGE

	Week	Date	Assignment Due	Class Topic	
UNIT ONE: Background	1	Aug 19		Introduction	
		Aug 21	Reading #1	The Immune System	
	2	Aug 26	Reading #2	Pathogens & Transmission	
		Aug 28	Reading #3	One Health	
	3	Sept 2	NO CLASS – LABOR DAY		
		Sept 4	Reading #4	Anthropology of Zoonosis	
	4	Sept 9	EXAM		
		Sept 11	VIDEO – <i>Contagion</i>		
UNIT TWO: Zoonotic Diseases	5	Sept 16	Quammen - Part 1 <i>Contagion</i> VRP	Hendra	
		Sept 18	Quammen - Part 2	Ebola	
	6	Sept 23	Quammen - Part 3	Malaria	
		Sept 25	VIDEO – <i>Mosquito</i>		
	7	Sept 30	Quammen - Part 4 <i>Mosquito</i> VRP	SARS	
		Oct 2	Reading #5 Self-assessment 1	Sleeping sickness	
	8	Oct 7	Quammen - Part 5	Lyme disease, psittacosis & Q fever	
		Oct 9	Quammen - Part 6	B virus	
	9	Oct 14	NO CLASS – FALL BREAK		
		Oct 16	Reading #6 Reading #7	Tuberculosis and Plague	
	10	Oct 21	Quammen - Part 7	Herpes B & Nipah	
		Oct 23	Quammen – Parts 8 & 9	HIV/AIDS	
	UNIT THREE: Anthropological Perspectives	11	Oct 28	Farmer Part 1 Paper Topic Due!	Ethnography - <i>AIDS & Accusation</i>
			Oct 30	Farmer Part 2	Ethnography - <i>AIDS & Accusation</i>
12		Nov 4	Farmer Part 3	Ethnography - <i>AIDS & Accusation</i>	
		Nov 6	VIDEO – <i>Fire In the Blood</i>		
13		Nov 11	NO CLASS – VETERAN'S DAY		
		Nov 13	Farmer Parts 4 & 5 <i>Fire In the Blood</i> VRP	Ethnography - <i>AIDS & Accusation</i>	
14		Nov 18	Reading #8	Domestication & settlement patterns	
		Nov 20	Reading #9	Funerary practices	
15		Nov 25	Reading #10	Exotic Pet Trade & Climate Change	
		Nov 27	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK		
16		Dec 2	Reading #11	Coronaviruses	
		Dec 4	Reading #12	Final Thoughts	
Dec 9th 4:30 PM - Portfolio and Self-Assessment 2 Due!					