



Center for Engaged Learning Abroad

Health, Belief, and Ethnomedicine: Traditional Healing and Medical Anthropology in Belize

Course Number: BIO

Course offered at Sacred Heart College by CELA

Instructor: Andrew Hatala, PhD

Email: andrew.hatala@umanitoba.ca

Credit: 3 hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Contemporary indigenous groups draw on a long history of working with medicinal plants from their surrounding environment, while taking a holistic approach to health care. Around the globe many traditional health practices are quickly fading, however traditional healers remain widely consulted and essential members of their communities. This course will offer an introduction to the world of traditional health as it is practiced and integrated into daily life in southern Belize. The health practices of Maya and Garifuna populations will be explored in-depth, with a focus on their vitality and relevance to people's lives. Through in-class lectures and discussions, readings, guest lectures, visits with traditional healers and other elders, tours of a medicinal plant garden and medicinal plant walks with healers, students will have the opportunity to experience unique health traditions as they have been passed down through generations and begin to understand their form and function in today's world.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course, students should:

- Have a deep understanding of the importance of indigenous and traditional medical systems for people's continued health and well-being;
- Develop insight into the relationships between traditional medicine and biomedicine;
- Have proficiency in the history and cultures of indigenous populations in Belize;
- Be challenged to make connections between the course readings and lectures and people's actual health care experiences;
- Have an understanding of the role of traditional medicine within the Belizean health care system and how this might apply in other South and North American contexts.

COURSE READINGS AND MATERIALS:

Readings will be provided to students in electronic format prior to the lectures and assignments.

TEACHING APPROACH

The main method of instruction was Problem Based Learning (PBL), which is an instructional approach to encourage meaningful, student-focused learning. The trainer will draw on the principles of adult learning, which states that for adults: they must be partners in their own educational plans and evaluations; they learn experientially, based on positive and negative experiences; the material must be relevant and problem-based learning (PBL) is more effective than content-based learning.

In addition to PBL, the following strategies will be used during the ten-day training: Field work, Cooperative Learning, Lecturing, Individual/Partner Exercises, journal entries, and presentations. Students should be prepared to hike (slow-paced) on sometimes rough trails in the forest; please bring appropriate footwear, clothing, hat and insect repellent.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT:

Students can take this course for credit (issued by their home institution, generally for 3 credit hours) or they can take it for personal development. For those wishing to receive academic credit for the course or for those wishing to receive a grade for the course and the ability to access a letter of completion from CELA showing that grade, the following assignments will make up the elements of the final grade. For those wishing to take the course for personal development, you will be expected to participate actively in all discussions and fieldwork and will be asked to complete all field work sheets and to prepare a presentation for the class, but will not be asked to write the final exam and no grade will be recorded for you.

METHODS OF EVALUATION:

Participation	10%
Reflective Journal (4 entries)	40%
Course Paper	30%
Final Presentation	20%

Participation:

Students are expected to prepare by completing the assigned readings and are expected to actively participate by asking questions and contributing during the discussions and guest lectures. Students will also be encouraged to share on the subject of their reflective journal entries.

Reflective Journals:

Students are expected to keep a reading/reflective journal throughout the course and submit four entries – each entry no more than 2 pages in length (12 pt, double line spacing, see details below).

1. Reflective Journal 1: This entry will reflect on health issues and traditional medicine and should be based on the initial readings. You should raise 3 to 4 questions/issues and explain why they are relevant and/or important. These issues can then be used as the subject of your 3 other entries and also the subject of your term paper.
2. Reflective Journal 2-4 – these ideally should be on the questions you posed at the beginning of the course but may deviate from these as interest in other areas develops.

Term Papers:

The students will prepare a 8-10 page term paper on a topic agreed upon with the professor on an issue that will allow them to explore a particular issue related to health and traditional medicine in Belize. These papers can make use of the reflective entries, course readings and lectures and talks with guest speakers. Students are encouraged to identify their topic within the first 2 days of the course. The due date for the papers is one week following the last day of class June 17th 2016.

Presentation:

This will be a 15-20 minute power point presentation based on the term paper and will be on the last day of the course.

The grade distribution for this course is as follows:

95 - 100	A	75 - 79.9	C+	< 60	F
90 - 94.9	A-	70 - 74.9	C		
85 - 89.9	B+	65 - 69.9	D+		
80 - 84.9	B	60 - 64.9	D		

COURSE SCHEDULE: Subject to Change

Date	Readings / Activities	Readings / Activities
<u>Day 1</u> May 30 2016	Introduction to course (San Ignacio) Traditional Health and Medicine Basic concepts 1: Medical Anthropology Visit to local healer (Lucas Medina) – medicinal garden, jungle trail, and preparation of traditional medicines.	Good (1994) “Medical anthropology and the problem of Belief” Kirmayer (2004) “The cultural diversity of Healing” Finkler (1984) “Sacred healing and biomedicine compared”
<u>Day 2</u> May 31 2016	Basic concepts 2: (San Ignacio) Medical Anthropology The questions of efficacy Visit to Dr Harry Guy (traditional medications)	Kirmayer (2007) “Psychotherapy and the cultural concept of the person” Waldram (2004) “The efficacy of traditional medicine” Waldram, J. B. (2013). “Transformative and Restorative Processes”
<u>Day 3</u> June 1 2016	Health Care in Belize (San Ignacio) Field Tour of local health facilities; visit variety of local households A question of “Mental Health” Guest speaker: mental health nurses *1st Journal Reflection due	Killion & Cayetano (2009). “Making Mental Health a priority in Belize” Blanchard, & Bean, (2001). “Healing Practices of the People of Belize” Government of Belize (2007). “Identification of Best Practices in Primary Care”
<u>Day 4</u> June 2 2016	History and Culture of Maya in Belize (San Ignacio) Guest Lecture: Maya Health and Spirituality Field: Visit Maya Village and Maya archeological sites Traditional Knowledge & Science	Nigh (2002) “Maya medicine in the biological gaze” Ekelman, Bazyk, & Bello-Haas, (2002). “An occupational perspective of the well-being of Maya women in Southern Belize” Waldram, J. B., & Hatala, A. R. (2015). “Latent and Manifest Empiricism in Q’eqchi’ Maya Healing”
<u>Day 5</u> June 3 2016	Contemporary Maya healing 1 (San Ignacio) Field Visit Belize Botanic Gardens Maya Healing Garden and Garden Tour; Healer Demonstrations in San Ignacio *2nd Journal Reflection due	Harvey (2011). “Maya mobile medicine in Guatemala” Waldram, Cal, & Maquin, (2009). “The Q’eqchi’ Healer’s Association of Belize”
Day 6-7	Weekend free time	
<u>Day 8</u> June 6 2016	Contemporary Maya healing 2 (Toledo) Field Visit Maya Healing Garden (Maya Healers Association); Garden Tour; Healer Demonstrations; a visits to Maya ceremonial sites (Lim Ni Punit).	Hatala & Waldram (2015). “The Role of Sensorial Processes in Q’eqchi’ Maya Healing” Hatala, Waldram, & Caal, (2015). “Narrative Structures of Maya Mental Disorders”
<u>Day 9</u> June 7 2016	History and Culture of Garifuna (Toledo) Guest Lecture: Garifuna Health and Spirituality Arzu Mountain Spirit Wellness Centre	To be announced
<u>Day 10</u> June 8 2016	Contemporary Garifuna healing 1(Toledo) Field visit: Medicinal Plant Hike with Garifuna Healer; healer demonstrations and workshop with Garifuna Healer	To be announced

	(Arzu) *3rd Journal Reflection due	
<u>Day 11</u> June 9 2016	Contemporary Garifuna healing 2 (Toledo) Field visit: healer demonstrations and workshop with Garifuna Healer (Arzu) Visit to Baranco and Ixcacao chocolate factory Maya Center for the night and workshop with Aurora Saqui.	To be announced
<u>Day 12</u> June 10 2016	Course Summary & Review Location: Tropical Education Center (TEC) Students to be picked up on Saturday morning from TEC and taken to the airport (or to San Ignacio if they are moving on to another course) *4th Journal Reflection due *Optional evening tour of Belize Zoo	Student Presentations

POLICIES and RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. CELA is committed to the sustainable development of Belize. You can play a part in that by ensuring that you leave only your footprints behind in Belize. Please do not leave any garbage behind at any classroom or field site. Where you have a choice, CELA encourages students to drink soft drinks from glass bottles (they can be recycled) and not from plastic (they are burned). Belikin and Stout beer bottles are recycled but Lighthouse bottles are not. Please use cloth bags instead of taking plastic bags from stores. Where possible, avoid buying food in Styrofoam containers.
2. CELA values the diversity of its student body, staff and faculty. As such, we are committed to gender-neutral and bias-free language. Everyone is expected to support this policy in written materials and spoken contributions to class sessions.
3. CELA is committed to intellectual and academic honesty. In any assignment, please ensure that you give credit to the original author(s) to avoid any issues of plagiarism.
4. Everyone is expected to participate in the course. Classroom discussions and field experiences benefit from your questions and thoughts.

ESSAY STYLE & FORMATTING:

Except when gender specificity is necessitated by the topic or context, gender inclusive language must be used. All assignments require you to use 12-point Times New Roman font with 2.5 cm (1 inch) margins. Lines are to be double-spaced and make sure that your program is NOT defaulted to add a space between paragraphs. APA formatting is to be used on all assignments. This includes: title page, page layout, in-text citations, and reference pages. For details on APA style, see the style guide posted on the course website or go to <http://www.apastyle.org/>. Marks will be deducted for incorrect citation and referencing. Absent citations and references may result in academic misconduct. See plagiarism in the following section. It is expected that you will develop and improve upon your writing skills throughout the course. Marks will be deducted for poor grammar, spelling errors, and generally unreadable work.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & PLAGERISM:

Academic integrity, or honesty in academic work, is a core value of CELA. Violations to academic integrity include, but are not limited to cheating, plagiarism and fraud. It will be important for students to acquaint themselves with comparable Academic Integrity policies at the University of Manitoba
http://umanitoba.ca/student/resource/student_advocacy/academicintegrity/Academic-

[Integrity-policies-and-procedures.html](#).

Plagiarism or any other form of cheating is considered a serious offence at the University. Students who are deemed having plagiarized a paper in this course will be reported to the Faculty of Graduate Studies who will determine the disciplinary action required.

FURTHER READING LIST:

Andrewin, A., & Chien, L. (2008). Stigmatization of patients with HIV/AIDS among Doctors and Nurses in Belize. *AIDS Patient Care and STDs*, 22(11), 897-906.

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Blanchard, D. & Bean, A. (2001). Healing Practices of the People of Belize. *Holistic Nursing Practice*, 15(2), 70-78.

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Chevalier, J. & Sanchez-Bain, S. (2003). *The Hot and the Cold: Ills of Humans and Maize in*

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Davis, W. (2009). *The Wayfinders: why ancient wisdom matters in the modern world*. Toronto, ON: House of Anansi Press.

Ekelman, B., Bazyk, S., & Bello-Haas, V. (2002). An occupational perspective of the well-being of Maya women in Southern Belize. *Occupational Therapy Journal of Research*, 23(4), 130-142.

Fabrega, H., & Silver, D. (1973). *Illness and shamanic curing in Zinacatan: An ethnomedical analysis*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Geertz, G. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Good, B. (1994). *Medicine, rationality, and experience: An anthropological perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Government of Belize (2007). *Identification of Best Practices in Primary Care*. Mental Health Program, Ministry of Health, Belmopan, Belize

Government of Belize (2010). *Belize National Mental Health Policy: 2010-2015*. Ministry of Health, Belmopan, Belize.

Groark, K. (2005). *Pathogenic Emotions: Sentiment, Sociality, and Sickness among the Tzotzil Maya of San Juan Chamula, Chiapas, Mexico*. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles.

Groark, K. (2008). Social Opacity and the Dynamics of Empathic In-Sight among the Tzotzil Maya of Chiapas, Mexico. *Ethos*, 36(4), 427-448.

Harvey, T. S. (2006). Ipseity, alterity, and community: The tri-unity of Maya therapeutic healing. *Zygon*, 41(4): 903-914.

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Zarger, R. (2002). Acquisition and transmission of subsistence knowledge by Q'eqchi' Maya in Belize, In J. R. Stepp, F. S. Wyndham, & R. K. Zarger, (Eds.), *Ethnobiology and biocultural diversity* (pp. 593–603). Athens: University of Georgia Press.