

# Anthropology of Biomedicine & Biotechnology

## ANTHRO 139A (60480)

### TIME & LOCATION

M/W/F 12-12:50pm  
Room: SE2 1306

### PROFESSOR INFO

Angela C. Jenks, Ph.D.

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Email: [ajenks@uci.edu](mailto:ajenks@uci.edu)

Phone: 949-824-3188

Office hours: Weds. 4-7pm  
or by appointment

### COURSE WEBSITE

Information for this course can be found through the EEE system at: <https://eee.uci.edu/14w/60480>

The course website includes links to readings, assignment information, lecture slides and handouts, discussion forums, and information about campus resources.

## Course Description

Stem cells, GMOs, artificial hearts, pharmacogenomics: biomedicine and biotechnologies affect the way we are born, live, reproduce, and die in increasing ways and with unprecedented consequences.

This course is an introduction to the anthropological study of biomedicine and biotechnology, and it explores the sociocultural influences and repercussions of biomedical approaches to disease, health, and science.

We begin with an overview of anthropological concerns with the culture of biomedicine, and examine the social, political, and economic conditions that influenced the emergence and global dominance of biomedicine.

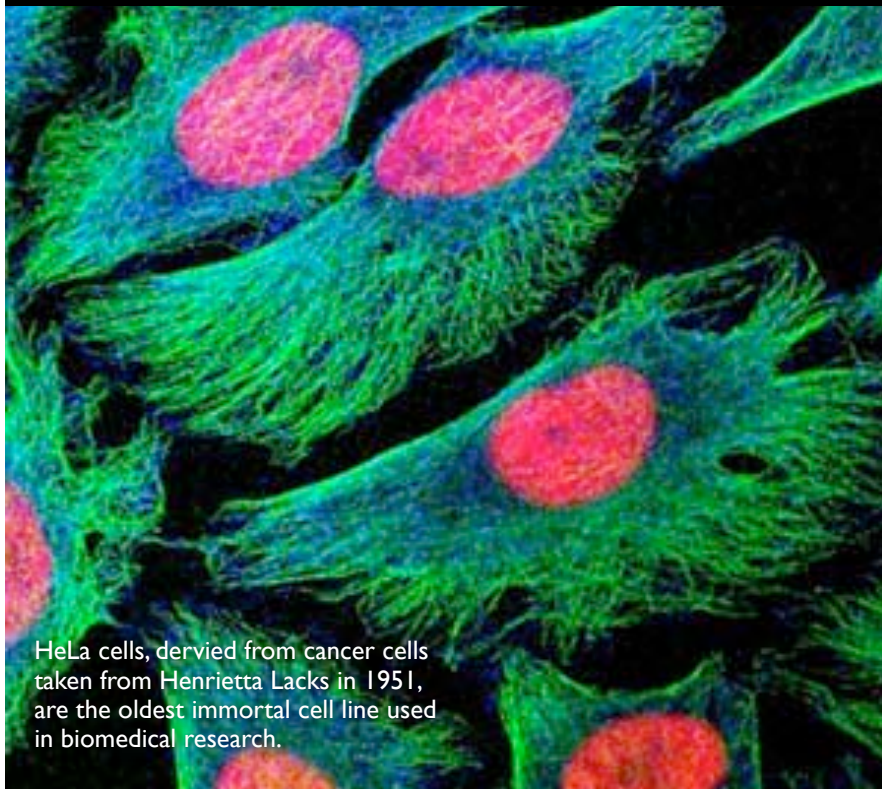
Next, we will explore the way biomedical knowledge is produced, learned, and maintains authority over expanding areas of human life.

In the final portion of the class, we will explore the varied impacts of several recent biotechnologies, including new imaging techniques, genetic research and testing, pharmaceuticals, assisted reproductive technologies, and end-of-life care.

### Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the class, students should be able to:

- ◆ Place the development of biomedicine and select biotechnologies in their historical, sociocultural, and political contexts.
- ◆ Identify and critically evaluate key questions, concerns, and approaches in the anthropological study of biomedicine.
- ◆ Apply an anthropological perspective to the observation and analysis of biomedical settings.



HeLa cells, derived from cancer cells taken from Henrietta Lacks in 1951, are the oldest immortal cell line used in biomedical research.

## GRAND ROUNDS

Grand Rounds are an important ritual of biomedical education, most often taking the form of lectures presented to physicians, residents, and medical students.

Grand Rounds are usually held on a weekly schedule, and specific topics may or may not be announced ahead of time.

To find Grand Rounds schedules at UCI, visit <http://www.medicine.uci.edu/grand.asp> or [http://www.meded.uci.edu/cme/regularly\\_scheduled\\_activities.asp](http://www.meded.uci.edu/cme/regularly_scheduled_activities.asp)

## Course Requirements

### Attendance & Activities (10% of grade)

The weekly class sessions are a main source of learning for the course. Please arrive to class on time and plan to stay for the entire session.

There will be multiple activities throughout the quarter that are designed to give you an opportunity to apply the concepts we have been learning in class. These may include quizzes, short reflections, film viewing guides, or other activities. No make-up or late assignments will be accepted. Missing more than one activity will have a negative effect on your grade in the class.

### Grand Rounds Research Project (25% of grade)

Learn more about the culture of biomedicine by observing and analyzing Grand Rounds presentations at a local hospital or medical school. While many specialties have their own Grand Rounds, you may find it most fruitful to attend general Medicine (or Family Medicine/Internal Medicine) or Pediatrics Grand Rounds.

Complete the project in three stages:

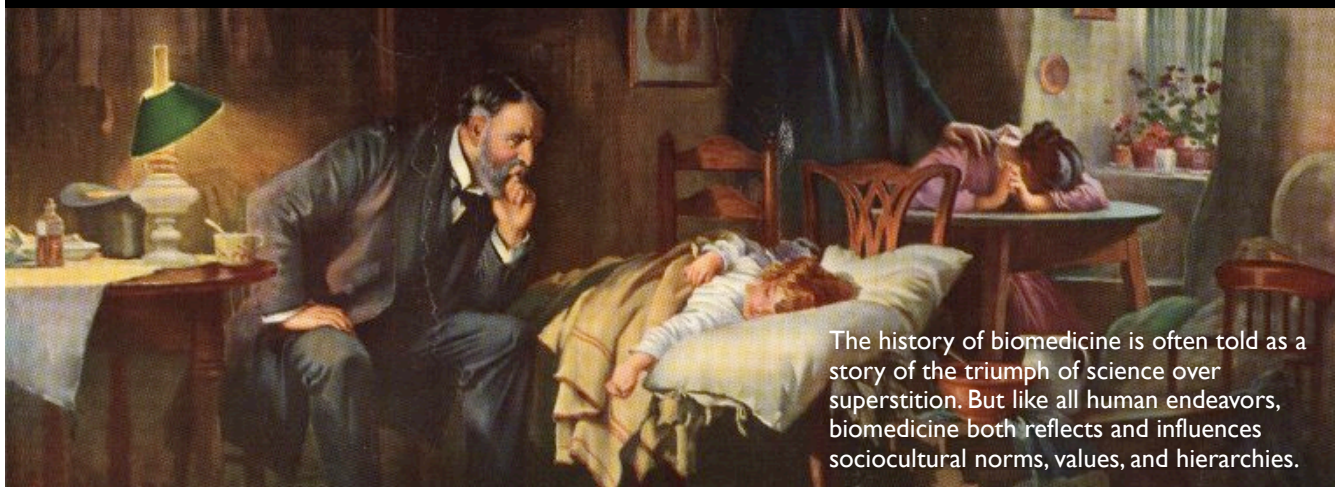
1. **Fieldnotes (10 points):**  
Attend at least one Grand Rounds session and take detailed fieldnotes.

### 2. **Thesis/Outline (20 points):**

Develop and outline an analytical argument using evidence from your observation.

3. **Analysis (70 points):** Write a 1,200 word (~4-5 double-spaced pages) paper analyzing and presenting your findings.

Additional information and grading rubrics will be posted to the course website. Feel free to speak with the professor if you have any questions about this project. For further assistance with the writing process, the [UCI Writing Center](#) offers drop-in and on-line peer consultations.



The history of biomedicine is often told as a story of the triumph of science over superstition. But like all human endeavors, biomedicine both reflects and influences sociocultural norms, values, and hierarchies.

## Course Requirements, cont.

### Midterm & Final Exams (45% of grade)

There will be one in-class midterm and a cumulative final exam. The exams may include multiple choice, identification, short answer, and essay questions, and a study guide will be distributed one week before each exam.

Make-up exams will only be available in extraordinary and well-documented situations.

### Reading Reflections (20% of grade)

A collection of articles and book chapters designed to introduce you to the breadth of the anthropology of biomedicine are available electronically on the course website. Some readings are posted as .pdf documents and others include links to the UCI library's electronic holdings (please

remember that you will need to use the UCI VPN to access these from off-campus).

Please complete the readings before the class session for which they are listed in the calendar. Written, 250-word reflections on weekly readings are required for at least **FIVE** weeks throughout the class. These reflections may respond to one or several of the assigned readings. They should not simply summarize the readings, but should offer critical comments and points for discussion.

Reflections should be posted to the course MessageBoard before the relevant class session. Reflections posted after this time will not receive credit. You are welcome to respond to other students' reflections or post additional thoughts and comments on the board.

## GRADING

<b>ACTIVITIES &amp; QUIZZES</b>	<b>40 PTS</b>
<b>READING REFLECTIONS</b>	<b>80 PTS</b>
<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>	<b>80 PTS</b>
<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	<b>100 PTS</b>
<b>GRAND ROUNDS PROJECT</b>	
Notes	10 PTS
Thesis/Outline	20 PTS
Final Analysis	70 PTS
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>400 PTS</b>

## GRADING SCALE (PTS)

A ≥ 374	A- ≥ 360
B+ ≥ 346	B ≥ 334
B- ≥ 320	C+ ≥ 306
C ≥ 294	C- ≥ 280
D+ ≥ 266	D ≥ 254
D- ≥ 240	F ≤ 240

# Q&A

## Course Policies

***What's the best way to contact the professor?***

To speak in person, come to my office hours on Wednesday afternoons or make an appointment. Otherwise, email ([ajenks@uci.edu](mailto:ajenks@uci.edu)) is generally the best way to contact me. During the week (M-F), I aim to respond to messages within 24 hours. Remember to include the name of the course in the subject line and your full name in your message.

***I missed class. What should I do?***

You are responsible for all material covered in class. In-class activities cannot be made up, although missing one activity will not have an effect on your grade. If you must miss a class session, check the course website to access any handouts and presentation slides, and ask another student for a copy of the notes.

***Can I use my phone or laptop in class?***

Electronic devices are useful tools but often distract from learning. Make sure your cell phones and mp3 players are silenced and put away during class. You may use a laptop/tablet in class, but only to take notes or access class materials like lecture slides. You may be asked to put your laptop/tablet away to avoid distracting other students.

***What if I need an accommodation because of a disability?***

The UCI Disability Services Center ensures access to educational programs and resources for all students. If you believe you need an accommodation because of the impact of a disability, please contact them at 949-824-7494 or visit <http://disability.uci.edu/> and bring your faculty notification letter to me.

***Can I turn the paper in late or take a make-up exam?***

Make-up or late exams will only be accepted in extraordinary and well-documented situations. Reading reflections cannot be made up (although you only need to write reflections for 5 weeks). Other assignments will lose 5 points a day for each day of lateness.

***I think my grade is incorrect. What should I do?***

If you believe there is a mathematical error in the calculation of your grade, please email me. Requests for a regrade should be submitted in writing within 48 hours of receipt of your grade. Please provide your original assignment and a detailed explanation of how you believe your work meets the requirements of the assignment/rubric.

***What is the course policy regarding plagiarism and academic honesty?***

Learning in this class depends on you completing all required assignments yourself. Violations of academic integrity (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will result in no credit for the assignment and possible course failure and referral for disciplinary action. If you are unfamiliar with UCI's policies on academic integrity, please go to <http://www.editor.uci.edu/catalogue/appx/appx.2.htm>

## Course Schedule & Assignments (Changes to this schedule may be made as necessary).

TOPIC	DATE	WHAT TO READ	WHAT'S DUE?
Week 1: Introduction to the "Culture of Biomedicine"	Mon, 1/6	No readings.	
	Wed, 1/8	Gordon, Deborah R. 1988. Tenacious Assumptions in Western Medicine. Pp. 19-56 in Biomedicine Examined, edited by Margaret Lock and Deborah R. Gordon.	
	Fri, 1/10	Payer, Lynn. 1996. Medicine and Culture. [Excerpt]	
Week 2: Genealogies	Mon, 1/13	Porter, Roy. 2002. Blood and Guts: A Short History of Medicine. [Excerpt]	Syllabus quiz (EEE)
	Wed, 1/15	Baer, Hans A. 1989. The American Dominant Medical System as a Reflection of Social Relations in the Larger Society. <i>Social Science and Medicine</i> 28(11):1103-1112.	
	Fri, 1/17	Comaroff, Jean. 1993. The Diseased Heart of Africa: Medicine, Colonialism, and the Black Body. In <i>Knowledge, Power and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine</i> . Shirley Lindenbaum and Margaret Lock, eds.	
Week 3: Learning Medicine	Mon, 1/20	NO CLASS: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	
	Wed, 1/22	Good, Byron J. and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good. 1993. Learning Medicine: The Construction of Medical Knowledge at Harvard Medical School. In <i>Knowledge, Power and Practice</i> . Shirley Lindenbaum and Margaret Lock, eds.  Davenport, Beverly. 2000. Witnessing and the Medical Gaze: how medical students learn to see at a free clinic for the homeless. <i>Medical Anthropology Quarterly</i> 14(3): 310-27.	
	Fri, 1/24	Wendland, Claire L. 2010. A Heart for the Work: Journeys through an African Medical School. [Excerpt]	

**Course Schedule & Assignments, cont.** (Changes to this schedule may be made as necessary).

TOPIC	DATE	WHAT TO READ	WHAT'S DUE?
Week 4: Medicalization	Mon, 1/27	Zola, Irving. 1972. Medicine as an Institution of Social Control. <i>Sociological Review</i> 20:487-504.	
	Wed, 1/29	Conrad, Peter and Deborah Potter. 2000. From Hyperactive Children to ADHD Adults. <i>Social Problems</i> 47:559-82.  Lock, Margaret. 1991. Flawed Jewels and National Dis/Order: Narratives on Adolescent Dissent in Japan. <i>Journal of Psychohistory</i> 18:507-531.	
	Fri, 1/31	Kaufman, Sharon et al. 2004. Revisiting the Biomedicalization of Aging: Clinical Trends and Ethical Challenges. <i>The Gerontologist</i> 44:731-738.  Boero, Natalie. 2010. Bypassing Blame: Bariatric Surgery and the Case of Biomedical Failure. Pg. 307-330 in <i>Biomedicalization: Technoscience, Health, and Illness in the U.S.</i> , Adele Clarke et al., eds.	
Week 5: Diagnosis, Discovery, and the Making of Medical Knowledge	Mon, 2/3	Armstrong, EM. 1998. Diagnosing Moral Disorder: The Discovery and Evolution of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. <i>Social Science and Medicine</i> 47(12):2025-42.	
	Wed, 2/5	Landecker, Hannah. 2000. Immortality, In Vitro: A History of the HeLa Cell Line. Pgs. 53-74 in <i>Biotechnology and Culture: Bodies, Anxieties, Ethics</i> . Paul Brodwin, ed.	
	Fri, 2/7	Epstein, Steven. 2000. Democracy, Expertise, and AIDS Treatment Activism. Pgs. 15-32 in <i>Science, Technology, and Democracy</i> . Daniel Kleinman, ed.  Petryna, Adriana. 2005. Ethical Variability: Drug Development and Globalizing Clinical Trials. <i>American Ethnologist</i> 32(2): 183-197.	
Week 6: Biomedicine and "Alternative" Systems	Mon, 2/10	Adams, Vincanne. 2002. Establishing Proof: Translating "Science" and the State in Tibetan Medicine. Pgs. 200-220 in <i>New Horizons in Medical Anthropology: Essays in Honour of Charles Leslie</i> . Margaret Lock and Mark Nichter, eds.  Wolpe, Paul Root. 1985. The Maintenance of Professional Authority: Acupuncture and the American Physician. <i>Social Problems</i> 32(5): 409-424.	
	Wed, 2/12	No readings. Catch up and review.	
	Fri, 2/14	Midterm Exam	Midterm Exam

## Course Schedule and Assignments (Changes to this schedule may be made as necessary).

TOPIC	DATE	WHAT TO READ	WHAT'S DUE?
Week 7: Imaging and Bodily Experience	Mon, 2/17	No Class: Presidents' Day	
	Wed, 2/19	Dumit, Joseph. 2010. A Digital Image of the Category of the Person. Pgs. 367-376 in <i>A Reader in Medical Anthropology</i> . Good et al., eds.	
	Fri, 2/21	Taylor, Janelle S. 2000. An All-Consuming Experience: Obstetrical Ultrasound and the Commodification of Pregnancy. Pgs. 147-172 in <i>Biotechnology and Culture: Bodies, Anxieties, Ethics</i> . Paul Brodwin, ed.	
Week 8: Genes and Genetic Testing	Mon, 2/24	Konrad, Monica. 2003. Predictive genetic testing and the making of the pre-symptomatic person: prognostic moralities amongst Huntington's-affected families. <i>Anthropology &amp; Medicine</i> 10:23-49.  Associated Press. 2013. After FDA Order, 23andMe halts health-related genetic reports. December 6.	
	Wed, 2/26	Nelkin, D. and M. Susan Lindee. 1995. Media-ated Gene: Stories of Gender and Race. In <i>Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture</i> . Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla, eds.	
	Fri, 2/28	Celia Roberts and Sarah Franklin. 2004. Experiencing New Forms of Genetic Choice: Findings from an Ethnographic Study of Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis. <i>Human Fertility</i> 7(4): 285-290.	
Week 9: Drugs	Mon, 3/3	Dumit, Joseph. 2002. Drugs for Life. <i>Molecular Interventions</i> 2(3): 124-127.  Martin, Emily. 2006. Pharmaceutical Virtue. <i>Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry</i> . 30(2):157-74.	Grand Rounds fieldnotes & thesis/outline due
	Wed, 3/5	Bourgois, Philippe. 2000. Disciplining Addictions: The Bio-Politics of Methadone and Heroin in the United States. <i>Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry</i> 24(2):165-195.	
	Fri, 3/7	Kalofonos, Ippolytos. 2010. "All I Eat Are ARVs": The Paradox of AIDS Treatment Interventions in Central Mozambique. <i>Medical Anthropology Quarterly</i> 24(3):363-380.	

## Course Schedule and Assignments (Changes to this schedule may be made as necessary).

TOPIC	DATE	WHAT TO READ	WHAT'S DUE?
Week 10: Remaking the Beginnings and Ends of Life	Mon, 3/10	Inhorn, Marcia. 2003. Global Infertility and the Globalization of New Reproductive Technologies: Illustrations from Egypt. <i>Social Science and Medicine</i> 56:1837-1851.	
	Wed, 3/12	Lock, Margaret. 2004. Living Cadavers and the Calculation of Death. <i>Body and Society</i> 10:135-152.	
	Fri, 3/14	No readings. Wrap-up and review.	Grand Rounds analysis due
Final Exam	Mon, March 17, 1:30pm-3:30pm		