TRADITIONAL MEDICINE, SHAMANISM AND FOLK ILLNESS IN LATIN AMERICA

M264: Latin American Studies/Community Health Sciences/Anthropology
Tuesday, 9:00am-11:50am, CHS 71-257
Spring 2011

Dr. Bonnie Taub
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12-1pm and by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS
This course examines the role of traditional medicine and shamanism in Latin America. We will explore how indigenous and mestizo groups throughout the region diagnose and treat folk illness and Western defined diseases with a variety of methods. Culturally defined illnesses such as soul loss, aire, nervios and evil eye will be explored. Several case examples of shamanistic traditions and healing practices of midwives, bonesetters, healers of witchcraft, soul loss and other medicine men/women will be explored through lecture, readings, film. We will examine the use of art, music and ritual as well as psychotropic plants as part of the very heart of many Latin American cultural traditions.

Course Learning Objectives
1) To obtain an understanding of health status, beliefs and practices with an emphasis on cultural, psychological, political, social, historical and economic influences at the individual, family and community levels in a regional global context
2) In depth exploration of health promotion strategies and activities, including traditional, clinical, grass roots, social, educational at the community level
3) Opportunity to critically research and assess cross-cultural health issues

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<th>CHS 264: Learning Objectives linked to ASPH competencies</th>
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<td>Learning Objectives</td>
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<td>1. To provide students with understanding of historical,cultural, social and educational influences on health at the individual, family, community and international levels in a regional global context.</td>
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<td>2. To learn about health practices and participatory community involvement with regards to local healing techniques, clinical services, grass roots, and traditional means of health communication in the Americas region.</td>
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<td>3. To learn to critically assess the literature on the role of culture in health promotion in an international context.</td>
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M264: ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

1. Class participation and weekly attendance (10%)

2. Readings Discussion Leader- students to prepare discussion questions and a 1 to 2 page summary about books and lead a discussion with others, during one of the following sessions:
   - Week 4: Peyote Hunt
   - Week 5: Way of the Shaman
   - Week 7: Tobacco & Shamanism

3. Animal Guide Paper- write a two page paper describing, from an animal’s point of view, how as a shaman you might transform into that animal, move and sound like it, and the meaning associated with it. Choose an animal that you feel a kinship with. Be prepared to discuss paper and attach a photo or drawing of your animal and turn in to class. Due Week 5 (10%)

4. Summary Discussion (5 pages long, double spaced) of an Interview you Conduct with a traditional or alternative health practitioner in Los Angeles, of Latin American or other origin (ie: curandero, bonesetter, herbalist, masseuse, priestess, shaman, oriental medicine doctor, etc.)
   - Attach notes/ & topic guide. Due Week 7 in class (20%)

5. Final Paper on a topic of your choice related to traditional medicine, folk illness and shamanism in Latin America. Paper to be 12-14 pages long, double-spaced.
   - Paper due finals week, no later than Tuesday, June 6 by noon to Taub mailbox and A level, CHS (50%). Your interview and paper topic may coincide.
   - A one paragraph description of your paper topic with list of two references is due Week 5.

6. Oral Presentation to the class about your final paper topic, lasting 10 minutes, including a one page handout summary. Student presentations to be given during class, weeks 9 and 10 (10%).

READINGS

Weekly reading assignments will be required (see later). The course reader will be available for purchase from Westwood Copies on Gayley Avenue in Westwood village. Books will be available for purchase at the Health Sciences Bookstore.

Books:
- Meyerhoff, B. Peyote Hunt, Cornell University Press, 1976
- Wilbert, Johannes. Tobacco & Shamanism in South America, Harvard Press, 1993
# SCHEDULE – Spring 2011

**LAS/Anthro/CHS M264:**  
**Traditional medicine, Shamanism and Folk Illness in Latin America**  
Dr. Bonnie Taub

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<th>SESSION</th>
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<td>1 Tuesdays</td>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>Introduction to the study of Traditional Medicine, Folk Illness and Shamanism in the Americas</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>Traditional Medicine &amp; Indigenous Healers, Folk Illness</td>
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| 3         | April 12 | Shamanic Traditions  
*Eduardo the Healer*  
*Huichol Sacred Pilgrimage to Wirikuta*  
View at Powell Media Lab |
| 4         | April 19 | Hallucinogenic Plants & Shamanism in Mexico: Mushrooms/ Mazatec & Peyote/Huichol;  
*Peyote Hunt Discussion* |
| 5         | April 26 | Trance and Altered States of Consciousness; Shamanism and Nahuales  
*Way of the Shaman Discussion*  
Animal Guides Paper Due |
| 6         | May 3    | Afro-Brazilian and Caribbean Spiritism  
*Healing States; Interview Paper Due* |
| 7         | May 10   | Shamanism in South America; Warao & Yanomamo; RainForest, *Magical Death,*  
*Tobacco and Shamanism Discussion* |
| 8         | May 17   | Healing Artifacts-Class will meet at UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History |
| 9         | May 24   | Andes, Film: *The Spirit Possession of Alejandro Mamami*  
Course Summary; Student Presentations |
| 10        | May 31   | Student presentations |
REQUIRED READINGS

Week 1 Introduction
Eliade, Mircea, Shamanism, Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy
Chapters 1, 2

Week 2 Traditional Healers/Folk Illness

Bohigian, George, The history of the evil eye and its influence on ophthalmology, medicine and social customs, Documenta Ophthalmologica 94 91-100, 1997, Netherlands.


Week 3 Shamanic traditions
BOOK – Meyerhoff, B. Peyote Hunt (first half)

Week 4-Hallucinogenic Plants/Discussion
Meyerhoff, B. Peyote Hunt- finish


Recommended: Schultes, Plants of the Gods, (Peyote/Mushrooms sections).

Week 5 Trance and Altered States
Eliade, Mircea, Shamanism, Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy, Chapters 3, 4, 9
**Week 6 Spiritism/Candomble**


Introduction, pp. 1-18; Chapter 10: The Diabolic Root.


**Week 7 South America-Shamanism**


Furst chapter

*Plants of the Gods*: on ayahuasca, datura, etc.

**Week 8 Healing Artifacts/Fowler Museum**

Pollack, Donald, “Health Care Among the Culina, Western Amazonia, Cultural Survival Qly (12) 1.


Califano, Maria & Fernandez Distel, Alicia, “The Use of a Hallucinogenic Plant among the Mashco (South western Amazonia, Peru)”, Zeitschrift für ethnologie 107 (1) 129-143.

**Week 9 and 10 Student Presentations**