

Land Acknowledgement

We recognize and acknowledge that the University of Pennsylvania stands on the Indigenous territory known as “Lenapehoking,” the traditional homelands of the Lenape, also called Lenni-Lenape or Delaware Indians. These are the people who, during the 1680s, negotiated with William Penn to facilitate the founding of the colony of Pennsylvania. Their descendants today include the Delaware Tribe and Delaware Nation of Oklahoma; the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape, Ramapough Lenape, and Powhatan Renape of New Jersey; and the Munsee Delaware of Ontario.

Health and Healing in Abyla Yala (the Americas)

LALS 2978 | ANTH2978 | GSWS 2978 | HSOC 2332

T, TH 1:45pm-3:15pm

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Office Hours: Wednesday 11:00 am-1:00 pm (and by appt)

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On an ill-fated trek to the tourist town downstream from the field school I was attending on the Ecuadorian Amazon’s Napo River, I contracted what I thought was food poisoning. On the boat ride back home, I could feel the fries and mayonnaise start to gurgle in my belly, and by the time we were to sit for dinner a half hour later, I found myself retching uncontrollably in the kitchen garden. Between bouts of violent illness, the women of the Kichwa family hosting the school asked me where I had been. I told them I had probably eaten something that didn’t agree with me in town, but they insisted I tell them more: “Did you come home on the boat? What time did you come?” As I described the sun setting as we trolled up the river, a knowing look passed over their faces: “wayrashka,” one of them said, finally. “Wayra” means wind and –ashka is indicative of the past participle. I had been winded—hit by a bad wind. This kind of illness is an “illness of the land,” one that signals the breakdown of relations among people, places, plants, animals, earth beings (like mountains, lakes, and rivers), ancestors, and the cosmos.

My promptly called one of the men of the family, who began to gather specific leaves, tobacco, and ginger. He sat me down by the fire and proceeded to chew up and spit ginger on me. He then smoked a cigarette from the lit end and blow the smoke on my head, and then sweep me with the leaves for around 20 minutes. While he did this, other people in the field school came to sit and watch, or to just read by the fire. When the healing session was over, I did feel better, my stomach more settled. How are the body, illness, wellness, and overall wellbeing understood by Indigenous peoples of Abya Yala?

Health and Healing in Abya Yala (the Americas) in will introduce students to ecosocial notions of health, colonialism’s contributions to ill-health, and decolonial action as healing action. Part one of the course introduces general concepts of body, health, and illness in biomedical models. It then pivots to the relational and ecosocial practices of body, health, and wellbeing among many First Peoples of the Abya Yala, highlighting “radical relationality.” For many First Peoples, community includes humans, plants, animals, ancestors, and earth beings

(such as the land, mountains, rivers, and lakes) that are materially, socially, and spiritually interdependent. These beings work together to maintain a “shared body” through practices of reciprocal care. Part two of the course examines how the shared body has been and is threatened by the colonization of Indigenous lands and bodies through (e.g.) land dispossession, pollution, extractive industry, lack of access to quality education and medical care, forced sterilization, forced removal of children, exploitative economic relations, and political violence. The third part of the course will follow how First Peoples of Abya Yala are healing from the physical, social, and spiritual wounds of colonialism through decolonial action. First Peoples are creating their own healing centers and ecological protection agencies, engaging in Land Back movements, in legal and direct-action processes to protect the shared body from extractive industry, and reproductive justice movements. Healing is, then, future oriented, powering the “radical resurgence” of First Peoples.

Course Objectives

This course fulfills the SAS Foundational Requirement for Cross-Cultural Analysis. Students will become familiar with concepts of the body, health, and healing among indigenous peoples of the Americas. Questions that will be addressed will include where does the body begin and end? What constitutes the self and personhood? How has colonization and settler/internal colonialism affected indigenous peoples’ health? How have and do indigenous peoples use ancestral knowledges and relationships to land and local ecologies to help heal historic and contemporary wounds? Is there a political dimension to healing? How do autonomy and self-determination figure into healing and wellbeing? How do indigenous peoples use the law in their struggles for wellbeing?

Course Communication

Please use the “3 before me” method of communication. This means that when you have a question

1. Look at the syllabus. The answer may be there.
2. Ask your class buddy! You can also email the whole class through canvas messaging.
3. Email me if you still do not know the answer.

My email is lstavig@sas.upenn.edu. **PLEASE PUT THE COURSE NUMBER IN THE SUBJECT LINE.** This will ensure that you email receives priority attention. Please allow 48 hours for a response. If you do not hear from me after that time, please email me again.

Planning ahead and reading the syllabus can do a lot to ease confusion about assignments, readings, etc. But nothing is perfect, so please do not hesitate to ask if you do not see an answer anywhere.

Office hours:

You might know when they are, but what are they for? Office hours are time I set aside for *you*. During this time, you can come meet with me if you are having difficulties in the class, need clarification, or want more information about readings or research opportunities. ***If you do not let me know that something is wrong, I cannot help you.*** There are many resources campus to help you through difficult times, and/or enhance your educational experience. Please help me serve you.

Assignments

Articles marked [C] can be found under the resources tab on the course's Canvas page

1. Reflection Papers (10 total for 30%)

Students are responsible for **10 2-page reflection paper due DAY 2 of each week**. Reflection papers are to summarize each and all articles or book sections assigned for the week (usually 2 to 4 pieces) and to reflect on the implications each piece has for evaluating issues of health and healing in Indigenous communities. Reflections can and might include how articles or book sections speak to one another, compare or contrast approaches, or speak to an issue we have been discussing in class. **Both summary and reflection must be present to receive full credit for your paper.**

Each reflection will receive a grade of “0”, “0.5”, or “1” point. 0 indicates no credit: you did not turn in the work, or your discussion only scratched the surface of the author's arguments; 0.5 indicates half credit: your work is incomplete or insufficient; 1 indicates full credit: good work). If you receive a “0” or “0.5”, you can make up the work for full credit within one week (this only applies to work that was turned in. If you did not turn it in, there is no make-up). You can earn an “A” on this portion of your grade as long as you consistently receive “1” point for all ten reflections. A score of “1+” will be awarded to exceptional work which will count towards a grade of “A+” on the reflections.

2. Midterm and final position papers (25% each, 50% total)

The position papers constitute the major assessment of your understanding of the course materials in this class. They will ask you to take a position on an issue, and you will be evaluated on how substantively and fluently you **make use of course readings and lecture materials** to support your arguments and analyses in critical-reasoning form. Although these assignments are papers, you should consider akin to open-book essay exams as they involve an evaluation of your understanding of the key concepts/arguments introduced in class and the depth-level of your engagement with the course materials.

Papers will be 6-7 pages in length, double-spaced, with 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Please include a cover page with the title of the paper, your name, and the name of the class (LALS 2978 | ANTH2978 | GSW 2978 | HSOC 2332). Please use APA formatting for your citations and works cited page. Neither the title nor works cited page factor into the final length of the paper.

You will be given approximately two weeks of time to complete each paper. All the position papers must be submitted in hardcopies at the beginning of the class on the following dates:

Midterm:

Final Paper:

--OR--

In lieu of the midterm and final position papers, students can elect to do a **RESEARCH PAPER worth 50% of your grade** on a theoretical issue pertaining to the study of health and healing in indigenous communities. Topics might include the role of media and technology in Indigenous

health, healing and future making, like the Instagram accounts #everydayindigenous or #Nativewellness, language revitalization projects like *Vive el Quechua*, or anything else you might want to explore!

Final paper proposal: date

Outline: date

Annotated bibliography: date

Final papers: date

These papers should be **15-20 pages, double-spaced, with 12-point font and 1-inch margins**. Please use APA formatting for your citations and works cited page. Neither the title page nor the works cited page factor into the final length of the paper. A more detailed description will be offered to those students who opt for the research paper.

***Once you decide which assignment you want to do
you cannot change assignments.***

***Students are encouraged to use the writing resources center to aid the development,
organization and style of their piece***

Attendance and Participation (20%)

Group discussion and inquiry are crucial components of the class. Lecture is meant to give a basis for understanding the readings and to spark questions and connections to present in discussion, but your intellectual growth depends on your enthusiastic participation in class discussion. You are expected to keep up on the reading assignments. This will help you be part of meaningful discussion and debates in class. The readings are to be COMPLETED by the dates they are assigned in the “Course Schedule”. Be sure to take notes and come ready to talk about the readings with your peers.

Class discussion is an essential part of learning. Because of this, each of us should cultivate an attitude of openness, thoughtfulness and respect for other people’s opinions. We may not always like or agree what others have to say but learning to navigate disagreement and conflict is necessary for fostering growth and negotiating how we live together.

Remember, respect does not mean that we cannot disagree; rather, respect allows us to develop a capacity to communicate our ideas to others through constructive engagement and critical dialogue rather than through mockery or jeers. Any student that does not follow this code of respect will be asked to leave the classroom and come see me during office hours.

Regarding **attendance**: if you are absent, you cannot participate, so please come to class. Attendance will be monitored throughout the semester, and you are allowed a maximum of **two** unexcused absences without it affecting your grade. Further absences will be excused with proper documentation. For each additional *unexcused* absence, your participation will be dropped by one-third of a grade. For example, if your performance on participation is an “A-”, missing 3 classes will result in a “B+”, and missing 4 will result in a “B”, so on and so forth.

Class participation also means observing common class etiquette. Engaging in non-class-related activity during class not only negatively affects your learning and participation, but also distracts other students who are trying to learn. This breeds an environment of disrespect. Please note that engaging in non-class-related distractions will lower your participation grade without warning.

The course schedule may be modified based on the needs of the class

Books

We will be readings articles available through canvas and the library, but we will also be reading selections from these books. Most of them are available as e-books.

Allen, Catherine J. (1988). *The Hold Life Has: Coca and Cultural Identity in an Andean Community*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press.

de la Cadena, Marisol. (2016). *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean Worlds*. Durham and London: Duke University Press

Geddes, Gary (2017). *Medicine Unbundled: A Journey Through the Minefields of Indigenous Healthcare* Victoria/Vancouver/Calgary: Heritage House

Hernández Castillo, R. Aída. (2016). *Multiple Injustices: Indigenous Women, Law, and Political Struggle in Latin America*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.

Million, Diane, (2013). *Therapeutic Nations*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.

Stevenson, Lisa (2014). *Life Beside Itself: Imagining Care in the Canadian Arctic* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

Waziyatawin Angela Wilson and Michael Yellow Bird. (2005). *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook* Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research