

MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

79-312

Instructor:

Dr. Marie Norman

Spring, 2007

Tuesday/Thursday 9-10:20

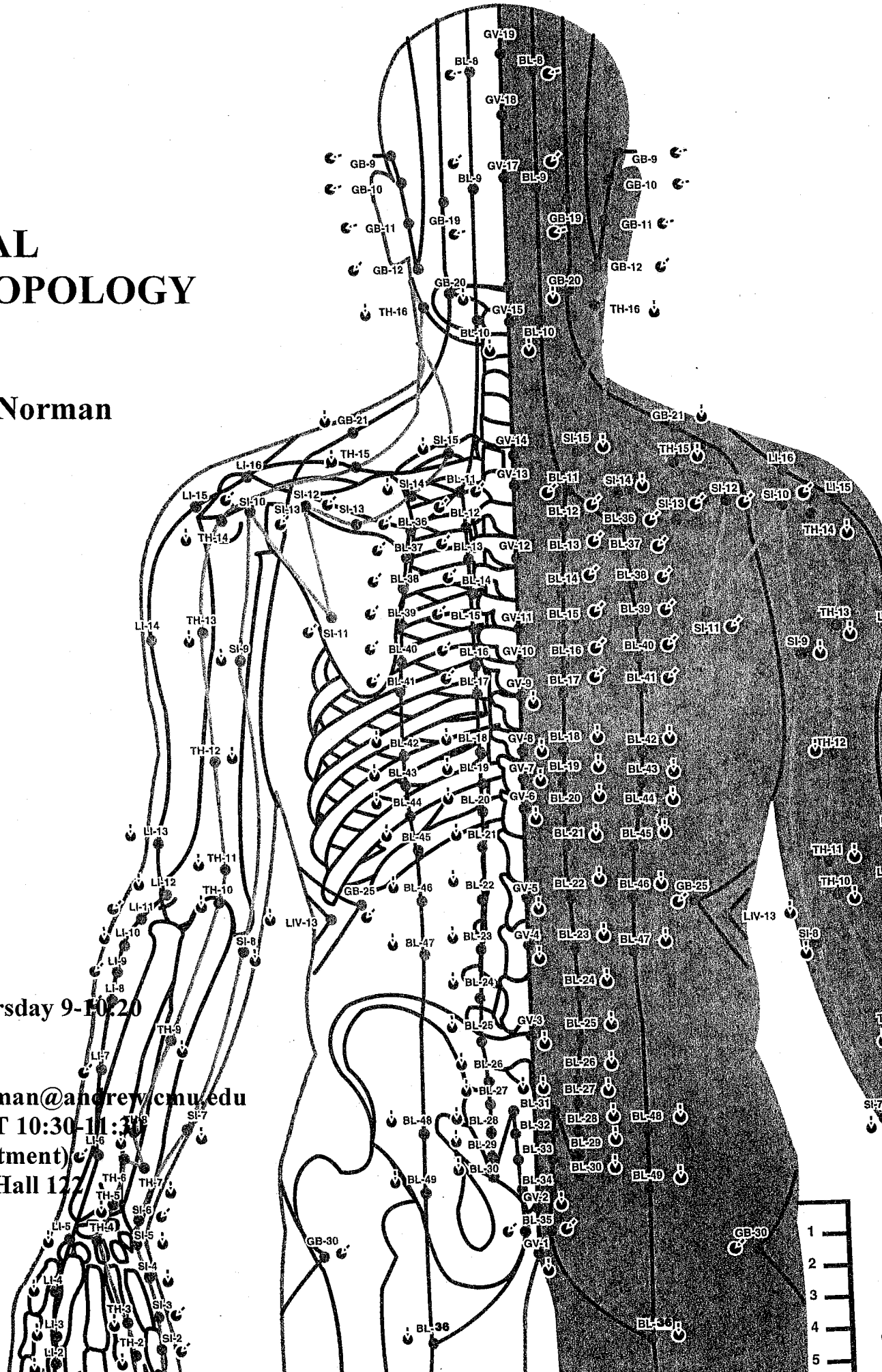
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Readings:

Reserve readings:

There are a number of required articles that are available on e-reserve via Cameo or in hard copy at the Hunt Library circulation desk. If you plan to access these readings via e-reserve, be sure to give yourself plenty of time, as the connection can sometimes be temperamental. To get to e-reserves, go to the CMU home page, click on Libraries, then Cameo, then Course Reserves, then my name. If you don't see the reading you're looking for, be sure to click Next – there may be two pages.

Peter Brown: Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology

This is a collection of readings that touch on various aspects of medical anthropology. In my opinion, it is the best of the medical anthropology readers, but it's far from perfect. I have assigned a number of the articles as required reading. I have not assigned the chapter introductions but if you want additional reinforcement of material covered in lectures, I encourage you to read these as a guide to key ideas in the field.

Katherine Dettwyler: Dancing Skeletons: Life and Death in West Africa

An example of clinical medical anthropology, this book is a personal account by a nutritional anthropologist of her experiences working in Mali.

Laurel Kendall: Shamans, Housewives and Other Restless Spirits: Women in Korean Ritual Life

An example of ethnomedicine, Kendall's book provides an account of a medical tradition that is strong on dramatic and performative elements, though increasingly marginalized in Korea.

Paul Farmer: AIDS and Accusation: Haiti and the Geography of Blame

In this book, typical of critical medical anthropology, Paul Farmer (PhD/MD and something of a god in medical anthropology) explores the beginnings of the AIDS epidemic, examining the connections between local communities and global power relationships.

How to read for this class:

Read efficiently: Don't just read; read with a purpose: identify the author's argument(s), determine what kinds of evidence she is using to support it, and assess its merits. If you focus on identifying the key features of the reading, you can skim a bit faster through the rest.

Read critically: Recognize the author's contribution to our understanding, but also critique faulty assumptions, weak reasoning, inadequate research methods, etc. On a more basic level, pay attention to things in the reading that strike you as somehow *off*, and ask yourself why.

Challenge assumptions: Be aware of the assumptions you bring to bear on the readings and identify material that challenges those assumptions. Also identify and question the author's assumptions.

Look for connections/implications: Articulate connections between readings and think about how each reading fits into the larger context of the course. Also consider the broader implications of each reading, i.e. If what this author says is true, then what else might be true? What other questions does this reading introduce?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance:

(1) Attendance is mandatory. Why? Because your regular attendance:

- * enhances your understanding of how the parts of the course fit together, and thus your ability to see the Big Picture
- * increases your comprehension of particular concepts which, if you fail to grasp them, can impede discussion and slow the whole class down
- * is important for class discussions and class morale, and thus your classmates' learning
- * is a requirement (however nasty and unreasonable) of the work world and is thus something worth getting used to

(2) I expect you in class on time. When you arrive late it disrupts everyone's concentration, so have your roommate wake you up, set two alarm clocks, leave the house/dorm 10 minutes early – do whatever you have to do: just be here on time.

(3) I expect you to be awake and attentive. I understand (I really do) that you're sometimes exhausted and that this class is early, but sleeping students are truly demoralizing for professors and distracting for fellow students. Bring a triple espresso, prop your eyelids open with little sticks, have a classmate flick cold water on you: just stay awake. Fortunately for all of us, medical anthropology is *fascinating* stuff, so you will want to be awake for every scintillating minute!

(4) You are responsible for everything covered in class, including films. If you miss class, please get the notes and/or handouts from one of your classmates. I will try to post all handouts on the course Blackboard site, but can't guarantee that everything distributed in class will be available on-line.

CLASSMATE CONTACT: _____