



Introducing Medical Anthropology: A Discipline in Action

By Merrill Singer, Hans Baer

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This revised textbook provides students with a first exposure to the growing field of medical anthropology. The narrative is guided by unifying themes. First, medical anthropology is actively engaged in helping to address pressing health problems around the globe through research, intervention, and policy-related initiatives. Second, illness and disease cannot be fully understood or effectively addressed by treating them solely as biological in nature; rather, health problems involve complex biosocial processes and resolving them requires attention to a range of factors including systems of belief, structures of social relationship, and environmental conditions. Third, through an examination of health inequalities on the one hand and environmental degradation and environment-related illness on the other, the book underlines the need for going beyond cultural or even ecological models of health toward a comprehensive medical anthropology. The authors show that a medical anthropology that integrates biological, cultural, and social factors to truly understand the origin of ill health will contribute to more effective and equitable health care systems.

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Editorial Review

Review

Introducing Medical Anthropology by Merrill Singer and Hans Baer has it all. It offers a memorable historical sweep of the development of medical anthropology along with contemporary research topics and concerns, and insightful and detailed cases are salted throughout the book. (Linda M. Whiteford, University of South Florida)

Singer and Baer's important book provides a valuable addition to medical anthropology in three important respects. It contributes an environmental perspective to medical anthropology's traditional focus on the social, cultural, and political economic contexts of health. It adds to a growing literature that situates medical anthropology as a domain of practice within applied anthropology. And, it demonstrates how stakeholder analysis is vital to understanding both the experience of health and the organization of health care systems. The result is a refreshing account that deploys specific case studies to show how anthropological knowledge may be used to improve human well-being. This book will appeal to students of health in the behavioral, social sciences, humanities, public health, and medicine. It will also be useful to health organizations committed to education in cultural competence. (Judith Noemí Freidenberg, University of Maryland, College Park)

The second edition of *Introducing Medical Anthropology. A Discipline in Action* provides a concise and well-organized overview for student audiences. The authors effectively demonstrate medical anthropology's ability to address specific health issues through research, intervention, and policy-related initiatives while also building a broad theoretically-based understanding of health and its relationship to social relations and the environment...The book provides an excellent general overview of the various approaches in the discipline, including biocultural and meaning-centered approaches.....Overall, this book provides a solid overview of the discipline with a focus on practice and application for students new to medical anthropology. The structure of chapters, inclusion of brief case studies set apart from the main text, photographs and tables, glossary of terms, and section with additional resources for students makes it ideal for classroom settings. The authors take care to provide examples in various geographic settings and at various levels of analysis, making this an engaging and reliable overview of the field. (*Anthropos*)

About the Author

Merrill Singer is a professor of anthropology and senior research scientist at the Center for Health, Intervention and Prevention at the University of Connecticut. He is the author, co-author, or editor of 24 books, including *Killer Commodities: Public Health and the Corporate Production of Harm* and *The War Machine and Global Health*.

Hans Baer is a senior lecturer in the School of Social and Political Sciences and the Centre of Health and Society at the University of Melbourne, Australia. His books include *Toward an Integrative Medicine* and *Medical Anthropology and the World System*.

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