



## Bergen Summer Research School

> Global Development Challenges

Global Health in Bio-medical, Social and Cultural perspectives  
Bergen, 21 June - 2 July 2010

PhD-Research Course: Health and Recovery in times of  
disruption: Anthropological and historical perspectives.

### Course leaders:

- **Associate Professor/ Senior Researcher [Nefissa Naguib](#)**, Uni Global  
Nefissa Naguib's research interests include studies on tracing how histories of warzones and the wake of violence shape communities and cultures. A central aspect in her studies is women's health and acts of resilience, recovery and efforts to rebuild lives in the Middle East.

- **Associate Professor/ Senior Researcher [Anne K. Bang](#)**, UniGlobal  
Anne K. Bang is a Researcher at Uni Global and Associate Professor at the Department of Archeology, History, Religious and Cultural Studies at the University of Bergen. She has worked on Sufism and Sufi rituals in the Middle East and Africa, including faith-based healing rituals.

### Invited Course leaders:

- **Professor [Marcia Inhorn](#)**, Yale University  
Marcia Inhorn's research revolves around gender and feminist theory (including masculinity studies), religion and bioethics, globalization and global health, cultures of biomedicine and ethnomedicine, stigma and human suffering. She is the author or editor of 9 books on reproductive and global health, including 3 on infertility and assisted reproductive technologies in the Middle East.

- **Associate Professor [Kjersti Larsen](#)**, Department of Ethnography, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo  
Kjersti Larsen has conducted extensive field work in Zanzibar since 1984 and since 1997 in the Sudan. Her research has focused on spirit possession rituals and their relationship to perceptions of health and ethnic identity.

### ***Relevant thematic frameworks:***

History and anthropology of the Middle East and Africa are currently engaged in understanding how violent events, suffering and ruptures alter even the most mundane of everyday cultural activities and human health. While increasing research attention has been devoted to contextualizing and

documenting public health within milieus pervaded by disruptions, only recently has research started to focus on the history and ethnography of recovery, rebuilding of lives and the various compassionate practices triggered by injury, disease and displacements of people.

This course introduces students to recent research on global health in anthropology and history, with empirical focus on the Middle Eastern and African context. The emphasis is on the categorization and conceptualization of suffering, healing and on the providers of care in various historical and cultural contexts, thus providing students with a wider perspective on health in times of disruption.

## ***Course description, goals and objectives***

The course will have three thematic focus areas, examining global health from the point of view of both anthropology and cultural history; Body and Mind, Hurt and Suffering and Healing. From the colonial era to the present, both the Middle East and Africa has been marked by changing modes of governance, wars and occupation, which in turn introduced new modes for perceiving the body, hurt/suffering, relief and healing. This process involves cultural negotiation, resilience, and, in some cases, the (re)invention of traditional practices. The course will draw on history to explore the complicated encounters between European, Middle Eastern and African cultures of health and healthcare, and between modernity and tradition.

### **Course Objectives**

1. Introduction to the subfield of health that is within the broad discipline of history and anthropology
2. Understanding of how history and culture shape the way a society constructs illnesses and their medical approaches
3. Explore various approaches to human pain and recovery from a holistic perspective
4. Learn first hand about salient issues in illness and cure through community understandings and involvement

### **Body and mind**

What are the connections between culture, health, and people's sense of wellbeing? Why are human troubles increasingly understood through the language of medicine? And yet people continue to seek alternative healing?

- The Cartesian dichotomy of body and mind to different ways in which people manage illness and death.
- How the modern body is interceded by a variety of cultural notions on the aesthetics of 'being'. Combining perspectives from social sciences and humanities the focus will be on the study of the body in culturally-prescribed ways.
- The phenomenology of the body and cross-cultural concepts of health, pain, disease and cure.

### **Hurt and Suffering**

The course will focus on varying notions of hurt/suffering, such as

- Traditional notions of diseases and perceptions of pain, including pain as a consequence of ruptures/disaster.
- The history and the transformation of "traditional" forms of medical knowledge about pain over time.

- How men and women make sense of adverse life events and strive for emotional adjustment and social functioning.

## **Healing**

Under this topic, the course will bring forth issues around healing which provide diverse ways of thinking about human resilience and recovery and how individuals make sense of the world.

- The explanatory place of faith, divination, sorcery and culturally defined concepts of vulnerability and providence.
- The construction of public health systems in response to colonial and imperial regimes across the region as well as the post-colonial responses of the nation states to growing health challenges.
- The emergence of post-World War II faith-based and secular humanitarian assistance, and development relief.

## ***Targeted students, Prerequisites and ECTS***

“Health and Recovery in times of disruption” is targeted at PhD students interested in a broader understanding of how history and culture shape the way a society constructs illnesses and their medical approaches. It is planned as a two weeks course which will include lectures, reading groups and films.

Course literature, which will be ready by May 1<sup>st</sup> 2010, must be read prior to the course. Group work and presentations will be set during the course.

Students will complete one written assignment (5000 words) on a specific topic in agreement with one of the course leaders. The essays should be typed, double spaced, 1.0~1.5” margins on all sides, and 12 size font. Deadline for delivery will be specified by the course leaders, and the papers will be graded according to pass/not pass.

Students are required to attend all the sessions of the course and participation is also mandatory in the plenary events of the overall programme of the Bergen Summer Research School 2010 (the programme will be published on the web in June 2010).

10 ECTS will be awarded upon successful participation and completion of the full programme, including the delivery of a research paper which is approved by the course leaders.

## ***Reading list:***

Will be ready by May 1<sup>st</sup> 2010