

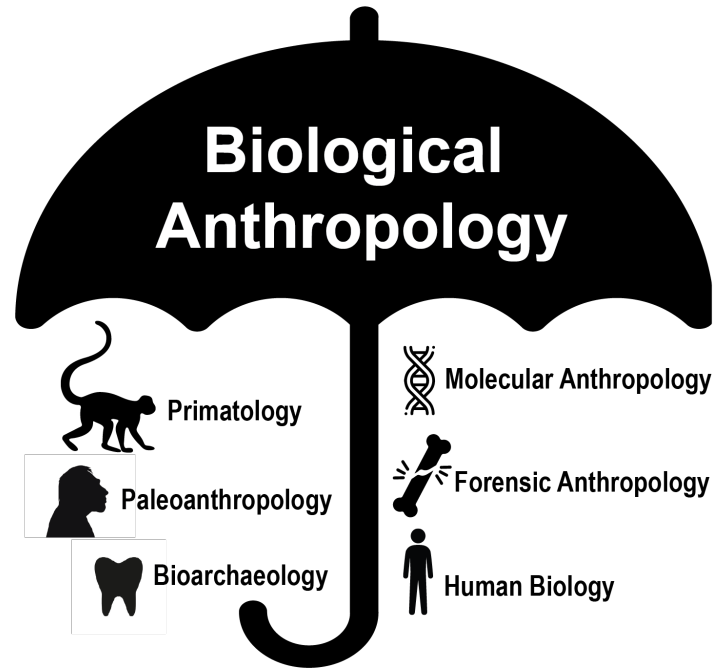
Brooklyn College - City University of New York  
Department of Anthropology

**Week #4- Biological Anthropology,  
Medical anthropology - epidemics, culture and race**

Prof. Joseph A. Torres-González  
ANTH 1100 - Culture & Society  
March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## Readings/materials to be reviewed

- Nelson, Katie, Lara Braff, Beth Shook, and Kelsie Aguilera. 2019. "[Introduction to Biological Anthropology](#)," in *Explorations: An Invitation to Biological Anthropology*. Ed by Katie Nelson, Lara Braff, Beth Shook and Kelsie Aguilera. Washington DC: American Anthropological Association. Pp. 1-27. (Open Educational Resource)
- De León, Jason. 2015. "Introduction" in [The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail](#). Berkeley: University of California Press.



# What is Biological Anthropology?

# What is Medical Anthropology?

- Medical anthropology, a distinct sub-specialty within the discipline of anthropology, investigates **human health and health care systems** in comparative perspective, considering a wide range of **bio-cultural dynamics** that affect the **well-being of human populations**.
- Medical anthropologists study the **perceived causes of illness** as well as the **techniques and treatments** developed in a society to address **health concerns**.
- Using **cultural relativism** and a **comparative approach**, medical anthropologists seek to **understand how ideas about health, illness, and the body are products of particular social and cultural contexts**.

- The **social determinants of health** are the economic and social conditions that influence individual and group differences in health status.
- They are the health promoting factors found in one's living and working conditions (such as the distribution of income, wealth, influence, and power), rather than individual risk factors (such as behavioral risk factors or genetics) that influence the risk for a disease, or vulnerability to disease or injury. (World Health Organization, United Nations)



## SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

### How is this related to our current public health emergency?

- Who has access to health services, and Corona virus testing.
- Economic inequality – whom must work in the current crisis due to the lack of paid sick leave.
- Structural issues of the “modern” economies – US economic system vs European economic system – ideological differences (government)
- Race/ gender/ social class

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS/ CONCEPTS.

What is human biology? What are some subfields of biological anthropology and what do they study?

What does it mean when the authors state that “anthropologists are scientists”? (Think of the scientific method and the questions that biological anthropologists attempt to answer)

How is Jason De León using Archaeology, Biological Anthropology and Ethnography to provide us a full picture of the “migrant trail”?