

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

21A.215 Medical Anthropology
Fall 2008

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.

Questions on D.P. Gordon, Hospital Slang

1. What were your reactions to Gordon's description of hospital slang?
2. What are the functions of such speech, according to him? Compare his examples of "insider" speech to the points I made in the lecture on "The Institution of Medicine I."
3. It has been said that all humor depends on someone feeling pain. Support this statement, or argue against it, with references to this article.
4. Compare the behavior reported by Gordon to the various kinds of joking you're familiar with.
5. Define the concept of *social control*. Give five medically-related examples.
6. Are forms of social control evident in Gordon's data?
7. Compare the slang reported by Gordon to the jargon spoken by the residents in Luhrmann's book.
8. Luhrmann states: "Medicine has a macho culture passed on from brutalized class to brutalized class." Compare this statement (and her discussion of the novel *The House of God* on p. 92) to Gordon's analysis of hospital slang.
9. Compare Gordon's analysis/interpretation of this type of speech to your own explanation, if they differ.