The Medical Anthropology Forum Presents
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Bridging the Gaps?
The National Medical Commission Bill and the Struggle for Professional Authority in India

The beginning of this year was marked by massive protests and strikes of biomedical doctors all over India against the recently passed National Medical Commission Bill Act, a legislation seeking to bridge the gaps of public health care through the improvement of medical training and practice. The original bill included the establishment of a “bridge-course” for so-called AYUSH practitioners in order to legally allow them to prescribe biomedical drugs. This aspect was particularly criticized by biomedical interest groups, who saw in it a state supported threat against their professional status vis-à-vis non-biomedical practitioners. This talk will discuss the struggle for professional authority from the backdrop of this highly controversial bill. Through an historical and ethnographical contextualization of the tensions between biomedical, AYUSH and so-called unqualified medical practitioners in India, I will scrutinize the role of the state and practitioners in the delineation of “systems of medicine”, critically discussing this category in connection to the public health care agenda of the country.

Tuesday, December 11
17:15-18:45
Room Z10, South Asia Institute