

Culture, mental health and psychiatry

(CHDV 23301, 33301; ANTH 24315, 35115; HIPS 27302)
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SUMMARY

While mental illness has recently been framed in largely neurobiological terms as “brain disease,” there has also been an increasing awareness of the contingency of psychiatric diagnoses. In this course, we will draw upon readings from medical and psychological anthropology, cultural psychiatry, and science studies to examine this paradox and to examine mental health and illness as a set of subjective experiences, social processes and objects of knowledge and intervention. On a conceptual level, the course invites students to think through the complex relationships between categories of knowledge and clinical technologies (in this case, mainly psychiatric ones) and the subjectivities of persons living with mental illness. Put in slightly different terms, we will look at the multiple links between psychiatrists’ professional accounts of mental illness and patients’ experiences of it. Questions explored include: Does mental illness vary across social and cultural settings? How are experiences of people suffering from mental illness shaped by psychiatry’s knowledge of their afflictions?

PREREQUISITES

This course is intended for 3rd and 4th year undergraduates and graduate students with some background in the social sciences.

COURSE FORMAT

The course meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On Tuesdays we meet together as a group and I will lecture for most of the session. On Thursdays you will meet with your discussion section. My Tuesday lectures will not necessarily cover the readings

per se. Instead, I will provide a background and framework for our discussions of the texts on Thursdays.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated on the basis of the following requirements and assignments:

- 1) **Attendance** of lectures and participation in discussions (20% of grade). Please make sure that you complete the required readings for the day.
- 2) A series of short (500 word) **reading responses**. Beginning week 2 of the course, students will write a response to the readings for each week and post it to the “Discussion Board” section of the Chalk website. The reading response can either take the form of comments or questions that arise from the readings for that week, or a comment on a reading response posted by another student. If you choose to comment on another student’s response you should make clear reference to and engage with the text(s) being discussed as well. Students who would prefer not to share their responses with their classmates, can email them directly to me and to your TA. It is important that responses be posted (or emailed) 8 PM on the Wednesday *prior to* the Thursday class session. (20% of grade)
- 3) A take-home **midterm exam**. (30% of grade) Midterm will be distributed at the end of class on Tuesday February 12, and will be due on Monday February 18 at 10:00am.
- 4) A 3,000 - 4,000 word **final paper**. All students have the following options for the final project:
 - A) An **illness narrative** based on either 1) an interview with a family member or friend who has experienced mental illness, 2) an interview with family member or friend who has witnessed or been a caregiver for a relative struggling with mental illness and undergoing treatment, or 3) a first-person account of mental illness as found in an autobiography or film/documentary.
 - B) A **cultural analysis** of a chosen diagnostic category from the proposed DSM-V
 - C) A **review** of a full-length ethnography – chosen from a list – which links the book to course readings and situates it in the context of the anthropological and cultural psychiatric literature on mental health.

Students should prepare a one paragraph abstract proposing their topic by February 21. The paper is due on March 19 – one week after the last day of class. (30% of grade)

Students taking the course Pass/Fail must complete reading responses and either the midterm or final paper.

Two required books will be available for purchase at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore and on reserve at Regenstein:

Junko Kitanaka. *Depression in Japan: Psychiatric Cures for a Society in Distress*. (Princeton University Press, 2011).

Natasha Dow Schüll. *Addiction by Design: Machine Gambling in Las Vegas*. (Princeton University Press, 2012).

All other texts will be available in the “Course Documents” folder on Chalk.

Schedule of course sessions, readings and lecture topics:

1. MENTAL ILLNESS AND PSYCHIATRY: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Ruth Benedict. 1934. "Anthropology and the Abnormal," pp. 262-283 of *An Anthropologist at Work; Writings of Ruth Benedict*, edited by M. Mead. New York: Avon Books.

Ian Hacking. 1999. "Madness: Biological or Constructed?" In I. Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (pp. 100-124). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Charles Rosenberg, 2007. "Contested Boundaries: Psychiatry, Disease and Diagnosis," in *Our Present Complaint: American Medicine, Then and Now*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Laurence J. Kirmayer and Ian Gold. 2012. "Re-Socializing Psychiatry: Critical Neuroscience and the Limits of Reductionism." *Critical Neuroscience: A Handbook of the Social and Cultural Contexts of Neuroscience*. Suparna Choudhury and Jan Slaby eds. Wiley-Blackwell.

Film (in class): Robert Lemelson, *Shadows and Illuminations*, 2010. 35 min.

Jan 8 – Introduction to the course and lecture

Jan 10 – Discussion

2. EXPERIENCING DISTRESS

Amy Johnson. 2012. "I should be included in the census." *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 38(2), 207-208.

Arthur Kleinman. 1988. *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing & the Human Condition*. New York: Basic Books, pp. 3-55.

Robert Desjarlais. 1994. Struggling Along: The Possibilities for Experience among the Homeless Mentally Ill. *American Anthropologist* 96: 886-901.

Ellen Corin, and Lauzon, G. 1992, Positive withdrawal and the quest for meaning: the reconstruction of experience among schizophrenics. *Psychiatry* 55(3), pp. 266-81.

Jan 15 – Lecture

Jan 17 – Discussion

3. PSYCHIATRIC POWER AND INSTITUTIONAL LIFE

David Rosenhan, 1973. "On Being Sane in Insane Places," *Science*, 179, pp. 250-8.

Erving Goffman, 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Selections.

Lorna Rhodes, 'Psychopathy and the Face of Control in Supermax', *Ethnography*, 3 (2002), 442-466.

Paul Brodwin. 2010. The Assemblage of Compliance in Psychiatric Case Management. *Anthropology and Medicine* 17 (2): 129-143.

Jan 22 - Lecture:

Jan 24 - Discussion

4. THE EPISTEMIC CULTURES OF PSYCHIATRY

Allan Horwitz, "The Biological Foundations of Diagnostic Psychiatry," in *Creating Mental Illness*. University of Chicago Press: 2002.

How to think about science, Episode 22 – Allan Young; *Ideas*, CBC Radio; Audio interview (54 min):

<http://www.cbc.ca/video/news/audioplayer.html?clipid=1479178366>

Allan Young, 'How Narratives Work in Psychiatric Science: An Example from the Biological Psychiatry of PTSD', in *Narrative Research in Health and Illness*, ed. by Brian Hurwitz, Trisha Greenhalgh and Vieda Skultans (Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2008), pp. 382-396

Rebecca J. Lester, "Brokering Authenticity: Borderline Personality Disorder and the Ethics of Care in an American Eating Disorder Clinic," *Current Anthropology* 50, no. 3 (2009): 281-302.

Andrew Lakoff, "The Lacan Ward: Pharmacology and Subjectivity in Buenos Aires," *Social Analysis* 47 (2003): 82-101.

Jan 29 – Lecture

Jan 31 – Discussion

5. THERAPEUTICS AS TECHNOLOGIES OF THE SELF

E. Summerson Carr. 2013. "Signs of Sobriety: Rescripting American Addiction Counseling." In *Addiction Trajectories* Eugene Raikhel and William Garriott eds. Duke University Press.

Nikolas Rose, "Governing Conduct in the Age of the Brain." 2011. Video (Watch first 70 min) of lecture available at:
<http://somasphere.net/2011/04/nikolas-rose-governing-conduct-in-age.html>

Emily Martin. (2010) Self-making and the brain. *Subjectivity* 3(4): 366–381.

Joe Dumit, 'Drugs for Life', *Molecular Interventions*, 2 (2002), 124

Kelly A. McKinney and Brian G. Greenfield, "Self-compliance at 'Prozac campus'," *Anthropology & Medicine* 17, no. 2 (2010): 173-185.

Feb 5 – Lecture

Feb 7 – Discussion

6. THE SOCIAL PRODUCTION OF ILLNESS AND CHRONICITY

Tanya M. Luhmann, 2007. "Social defeat and the culture of chronicity: or, why schizophrenia does so well over there and so badly here," *Culture, medicine and psychiatry*, 31(2), pp. 135-72.

Byron J Good, et al. 2010. "Is 'Chronicity' Inevitable for Psychotic Illness? Studying Heterogeneity in the Course of Schizophrenia in Yogyakarta, Indonesia" in Lenore Manderson and Carolyn Smith-Morris, eds. *Chronic Conditions, Fluid States: Globalization and the Anthropology of Illness*. Rutgers University Press.

Anne Becker, 'Television, Disordered Eating, and Young Women in Fiji: Negotiating Body Image and Identity During Rapid Social Change', *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 28 (2004), 533–559

Angela Garcia, "The Elegiac Addict: History, Chronicity, and the Melancholic Subject," *Cultural Anthropology* 23, no. 4 (2008): 718-746.

Feb 12 – Lecture

Midterm distributed

Feb 14 – Discussion

Feb 18

Midterm due

7. RECOVERY, SELF-ADVOCACY AND IDENTITY

Nev Jones, “Keep it Complex”: Realities and Fantasies of C/S/X Activism

Athena McLean, ‘From Ex-patient Alternatives to Consumer Options: Consequences of Consumerism for Psychiatric Consumers and the Ex-patient Movement’, *International journal of health services*, 30 (2000), 821–848

Tanya Luhrmann, “Living with voices,” *American Scholar* Summer 2012.

Jim Sinclair, “Don’t Mourn for Us.”

Louis Charland, ‘A Madness for Identity: Psychiatric Labels, Consumer Autonomy, and the Perils of the Internet’, *Philosophy, Psychiatry, & Psychology*, 11 (2004), 335–349

Feb 19 – Lecture:

Feb 21 – Discussion

8. GLOBAL PSYCHIATRIES AND THE CULTURAL ENCOUNTER

Gananath Obeyesekere. 1985. “Depression, Buddhism, and the work of culture in Sri Lanka.” In A. M. Kleinman & B. Good (Eds.), *Culture and Depression*, (pp. 134-152). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Junko Kitanaka. *Depression in Japan: Psychiatric Cures for a Society in Distress*. Selections (Princeton University Press, 2011).

Vikram Patel. 2012. “Why mental health matters to global health.” Video (23 min) of lecture available at: <http://vimeo.com/48897107>

Derek Summerfield. 2012. “Why export mental health?” Video (11 min) of interview available at: <http://vimeo.com/54631746>

Feb 26 – Lecture

Feb 28 – Discussion

9. ADDICTION'S CIRCUITS AND TRAJECTORIES

Natasha Dow Schüll. *Addiction by Design: Machine Gambling in Las Vegas*.
(Princeton University Press, 2012)

March 5 – Lecture

March 7 – Discussion

10. SUMMING UP AND LOOKING AHEAD

Laurence Kirmayer, 2012. "Revisioning Psychiatry: Cultural Phenomenology, Critical Neuroscience, and Global Mental Health," Video (52 min) of lecture available at: <http://somatosphere.net/2012/11/laurence-kirmayer-revisioning-psychiatry-cultural-phenomenology-critical-neuroscience-and-global-mental-health.html>

March 12 – Lecture

March 19

Final paper due