

ANTH 423: Ethnopsychiatry and Spiritual Healing

Fall 2013; M W 4-5:15pm; BHSCI 107

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Overview: This course explores mental health and healing in a cross-cultural perspective. Through this course, students will learn to identify how both western and non-western traditions of mental healing—or what we will call culturally-situated “ethnopsychiatry,” which, in non-western folk traditions in particular are often religiously or “spiritually” based—function within particular sociocultural contexts.

Student Learning Objectives: On the one hand, students will learn to identify the extent to which mental disorders might be best thought of as either (i.) psychological and physiological realities that transcend particular cultural contexts, or as (ii.) primarily shaped, and even determined by, culture-specific social and political processes. Here, this class examines the appropriateness of the American Psychiatric Association’s DSM-IV/ 5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th/ 5th eds.) and the World Health Organization’s ICD-10 (International Classification of Diseases, 10th ed.) to explain disorders related to mental functioning (e.g., to cognition, mood, and anxiety) as they are found in non-western, and often small-scale tribal, societies. We will explore, for example, the utility of categories such as “depression,” “posttraumatic stress disorder,” “schizophrenia,” and “dissociative identity disorder” for experiences in these non-western settings. On the other hand, taking a cue from “positive psychology,” students will learn to appreciate not only mental dysfunction and disorder as they are associated with local religious and other traditions, but also the basis of psychological resiliency, strength, virtue, and happiness. As an example, we consider the possibility that both spiritual traditions of healing and also secular games and play provide not only therapeutic cures for mental dysfunction, but also formulae for the “good life”—that is, they allow individuals to cultivate meaning, satisfaction, passion, bliss, and even ecstasy in their lives.

Readings: The following texts have been placed on order with the CSU bookstore; they are listed in the order in which we will read them:

- T. Luhrmann, *Of Two Minds: An Anthropologist Looks at American Psychiatry*
- E. Watters, *Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche*
- P. Vitebsky, *Shamanism*
- A. Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*
- I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession*
- R. Sapolsky, *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers*

Additional readings can be found either on electronic reserve through the Morgan Library or on RamCT. These additional readings are important, as they often provide a more sophisticated theoretical foundation for course discussions and assignments.

Class Expectations and Graded Assignments: The course follows a traditional lecture format. However, emphasis is placed on discussion, and student participation is thus critical to this class’s

success. In order to participate meaningfully in class discussions, and also to ensure the quality of those discussions, students must keep up with assigned readings. Class readings should be completed *on or before* the week they are listed on the syllabus, with roughly the first half of the pages finished by Monday and the second half by Wednesday of each week. Faculty normally expect, minimally, two hours of outside work for each contact hour, thus roughly at least 6 total hours outside of class meetings (2 X 3 credit hours). Class participation—judged through quizzes on assigned readings assessing your readiness to participate, presentations/ discussion leads, and general meaningful participation in discussions—contributes roughly 20% to your final overall grade. Note that “meaningful participation in discussions” does not mean you need to talk a lot each class! Rather, I am interested in thoughtful consideration of and engagement with class topics, readings, and the comments of myself and students—demonstrated both in your writing and ideally in your at least occasional comments. Do note that absences can jeopardize the participation portion of your grade. Overall, I assess your final grade through the following weights:

Two short papers, due weeks 4 & 7: **20%** (10% each; 3-4 pages)

One more extensive paper due week 11 (on *Spirit Catches You*; 5-7 pages): **25%**

Class presentation / leading of discussion/ weekly readings write-up (each student will do this *once* during the course, working with others): **10%**

Pop quizzes / class participation: **10%**

Final cumulative exam (weighted more with wks. 10-16 material): **35%**

Final Notes: The course adheres to the Academic Integrity Policy of the General Catalog and the Student Conduct Code. Any breach of these policies and codes will be taken very seriously. For more detail, see <http://tilt.colostate.edu/integrity/honorpledge/>. Also, students should be aware that the contents of this syllabus – including *assignment due dates* and *assigned readings* – may change. You are responsible for keeping track of these changes through regular class attendance!

TOPICS AND READINGS

Part I: Introduction, What’s Wrong with the Patient?: The Social Life of Mental Disorders

Week 1: Introduction: Anthropological Approaches to Mental Health (Aug. 26, 28)

Film: *Dialogues with Madwomen*

Readings: T. Luhrmann, *Of Two Minds* (Introductory pages (Author’s note, etc.), pp. 1-24)

Week 2: What’s Wrong with the Patient?: Biomedical, Psychodynamic, and Ethnographic Understandings of Mental Illness (Sept. 2: Labor Day holiday, no class; Sept. 4)

Film: *Dialogues with Madwomen* (cont.)

Readings: T. Luhrmann, *Of Two Minds* (pp. 25-118)

Week 3: The Morality of Mental Illness (Sept. 9, 11)

Readings: T. Luhrmann, *Of Two Minds* (pp. 119-202, 266-end)

**Part II: Crazy Like Us, or, the Globalization of the U.S. (Western) Psyche:
“Depression” and the Power of the DSM-IV/ DSM5**

Week 4: Modern Psychiatry as Ethnoscience?: “Depression” Cross-Culturally (Sept. 16, 18)

Film: *Girl Interrupted* etc. (various clips showing U.S. mental disorder “models” or “frames”)

Readings: E. Watters, *Crazy Like Us* (pp. 1-7, 187-248)

A. Kleinman. “Social Origins of Distress and Disease: Depression, Neurasthenia, and Pain in Modern China”

G. Obeyesekere, “Depression, Buddhism, and the Work of Culture in Sri Lanka”

Paper 1 due Mon. Sept. 16th (10%): What’s Wrong with the Patient (in your chosen film)?
(See <http://www.psychmovies.com/> for film ideas)

Week 5: Crazy Like Us, or, Globalizing the U.S. Psyche: A “Cultural Frames” POV (Sept. 23, 25)

Film: *Cuckoo’s Nest* (excerpts)

Readings: E. Watters, *Crazy Like Us* (pp. 9-125)

Kleinman et al. “Culture, Illness, and Care: Clinical Lessons from Anthropologic and Cross-Cultural Research”

L.J. Kirmayer and N. Sartorius. “Cultural Models and Somatic Syndromes”

Week 6: The Anthropology of Psychiatry: Culture and the DSM-IV/5 (Sept. 30, Oct. 2)

Film: *Donnie Darko* etc. (additional excerpts, as time allows)

Readings: E. Watters, *Crazy Like Us* (pp. 127-185; 249-255)

T. Luhrmann, *Of Two Minds* (pp. 203-238)

**Part III: Communicating and Treating Suffering Cross-Culturally:
Conflicts between Biomedical and Spiritual “Idioms of Distress”**

Week 7: Health and Healing in a Religious Idiom: Shamanism and Spiritual Distress (Oct. 7, 9)

Film: *Between Two Worlds: The Hmong Shaman in America*

Readings: P. Vitebsky, *Shamanism* (pp. 6-25, 52-95, 96-127, 128-159)

A. Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* (pp. 1-59)

**Paper 2 due Mon. Oct. 7th (10%): Is “Depression” (and thus the DSM) a Cultural Construction? **
(Cite at least 1 relevant web article; for ex., Marcia Angell’s NYRB “The Illusions of Psychiatry”)

Week 8: Biomedical vs. Spiritual “Idioms of Distress”: The Californian Hmong Case (Oct. 14, 16)

Film: *Alejandro Mamani: A Case Study in Psychological Anthropology*

Readings: A. Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* (pp. 60-153)

M. Nichter, “Idioms of Distress: Alternatives in the Expression of Psychosocial Distress: A Case Study from South India”

M. Nichter, “Idioms of Distress Revisited” (pp. 401-409)

Week 9: Collisions between Medical Systems: *The Spirit Catches You*, finish discussion (Oct. 21, 23)

Readings: A. Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* (finish book)

M. Nichter, “Idioms of Distress Revisited” (pp. 409-412/end)

**Part IV: The Psychosocial Origins of Health and Healing:
Shamanism, Spirit Possession, and “Dissociation” Cross-Culturally**

Week 10: Adaptive and Maladaptive “Dissociation” (Oct. 28, 30)

Film: *Trance & Dance in Bali*

Readings: I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion* (Introductory pages (Prefaces, etc.), pp. 15-58)

C. Lynn, “Adaptive and Maladaptive Dissociation”

Week 11: Becoming a Spirit Medium: The Social Affliction Hypothesis (Nov. 4, 6)

Film: *Hail Umbanda*

Readings: I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion* (pp. 59-113)

Seligman, R. 2005. “Distress, Dissociation, and Embodied Experience: Reconsidering the Pathways to Mediumship and Mental Health”

**Paper 3 due Mon. Nov. 4th (25%): Does Cultural Miscommunication Cause Lia’s Suffering? **
(Analyze *The Spirit Catches You*, utilizing class (“cultural frames” and “idioms of distress”) perspectives)

Week 12: From Affliction to Affirmation: The Benefits of Spirit Mediumship (Nov. 11, 13)

Readings: I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion* (finish book)

R. Seligman, “From affliction to affirmation: Narrative transformation and the therapeutics of Candomble mediumship.”

**Part V: Stress and the Placebo/ Nocebo or “Meaning” Response:
Toward a General Theory of Mind-Body Health and Healing in a Sociocultural Context**

Week 13: Culture, Stress, & Health: The Mental Healing Power of (Spiritual and Videogame)

Avatars (Nov. 18, 20)

Film: *Magical Death*

Readings: R. Sapolsky, *Why Zebras Don’t Get Ulcers* (Intro. pages, pp. 1-70; rec: pp. 144-185)

J. Snodgrass et al., “Magical Flight and Monstrous Stress: Technologies of Absorption and Mental Wellness in Azeroth”

D. Moerman and W. Jonas, “Deconstructing the Placebo Effect and Finding the Meaning Response”

Week 14: ** Thanksgiving Break, November 23-Dec.1, No Classes! ** (rec: Read *Zebras*, it’s fun!)

Week 15: The Mental Healing Power of (Spiritual and Videogame) *Avatars* (Dec. 2, 4)

Video: My India research videos

Readings: R. Sapolsky, *Why Zebras Don’t Get Ulcers* (pp. 252-352)

J. Snodgrass, “Festive Fighting and Forgiving: Religion and the Mental Health Resilience of Indigenous Indian ‘Wildlife Refugees’”

D. Moerman, “Against the ‘Placebo Effect’: A Personal Point of View”

Week 16: Toward a “Biopsychosocial” Model of Psychiatric and Spiritual Healing (Dec. 9, 11)

Readings: R. Sapolsky, *Why Zebras Don’t Get Ulcers* (pp. 353-418/end)

C. Lynn, “The Wrong Holy Ghost”

C. Lynn et al. “Salivary Alpha-amylase and Cortisol among Pentecostals on a Worship and Nonworship day”

T. Kaptchuk, “The Placebo Effect in Alternative Medicine”

Final Exam (35%), Thurs. Dec. 19th (in BHSCI 107)
(Covers wks. 1-16, but emphasis on wks. 10-16)