SUMMARY
While anthropology and other social sciences have long explored the social and cultural shaping of the self and personhood, many scholars have recently employed the rubric of “subjectivity” to articulate the links between collective phenomena and the subjective lives of individuals. This graduate seminar will examine “subjectivity”—and related concepts—focusing on topics where such ideas have been particularly fruitful: illness, pathology and suffering. Throughout the course we will critically examine the terms “self,” “personhood” and “subjectivity”—and their relationship to one another. Each week we will discuss a mix of conceptual and ethnographic readings which draw on some common analytical frameworks and categories, including narrative theory, phenomenology, psychoanalysis, biopower and science and technology studies.

PREREQUISITES AND FORMAT
This course is intended for graduate students. Special provision may be made for selected advanced undergraduates to take part as well. The course will be run in a seminar format, with a minimum of lecturing on the part of the instructor. We will spend the majority of the time closely examining the texts for each week and discussing the problems they address. Please come to each class with two or three questions regarding the reading (whether or not you are giving a presentation that week).
ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION
Students will be evaluated on the basis of the following requirements and assignments:

1) **Participation** in weekly discussions.
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 course 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. It is important that responses be posted (or emailed) by 9 AM each Wednesday.
3) A final 3,000 to 4,000 word **paper**, for which you may either a) make a conceptual argument drawing on readings from more than one weeks, or b) use concepts from course readings to interpret findings from your own empirical research.
Schedule of course sessions and readings:

Week 1 – Person, self, subjectivity


Used in previous years:


Todd Meyers. “The patient as a category of thought.”


Week 2 – Experience and narrative


Byron Good, “The narrative representation of illness,” in Medicine, Rationality and Experience (ch 6).


Used in previous years:


Week 3 – Metaphor and embodiment


Used in previous years:


Week 4 – Suffering


**Used in previous years:**


Week 5 – The self, its disturbances and the work of culture


Used in previous years:


Week 6 – Emotion


Used in previous years:


Week 7 – Affect


Berlant, Lauren, ‘Slow Death (Sovereignty, Obesity, Lateral Agency)’, *Critical Inquiry*, 35 (2007), 754–780


Papoulias, Constantina, and Felicity Callard, ‘Biology’s Gift: Interrogating the Turn to Affect’, *Body c3 Society*, 16 (2010), 29–56


[Optional: read around in the critical discussion responding to Leys’ article]:

Used in previous years:

Week 8 – The self as subject


Used in previous years:


Week 9 – Making up people: technology and subjectivity


Used in previous years:


Week 10 – Neuro: engagements, experiments and entanglements


Roepstorff, Andreas, and Chris Frith, ‘Neuroanthropology or Simply Anthropology? Going Experimental as Method, as Object of Study, and as Research Aesthetic’, Anthropological Theory, 12 (2012), 101–111


Other modules/topics used in earlier versions of the course

Intimacy and care


Violence and the psychic life of power


November 18 – Therapy and the politics of recognition


Disordered states

Listen to: Byron Good, “Theorizing the ‘Subject’ of Medical and Psychiatric Anthropology,’ The 2010 Marett Memorial Lecture.

