

ANTH 545: Culture and Mental Health: Theory and Method
Fall 2013; Tues. 2-5pm; Eddy 116 (Ethno Lab: GSB 342)

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Overview and Learning Objectives: This course examines mental health in a cross-cultural perspective. Students will learn to appreciate the way culture structures both mental health and the (typically western) psychiatric framing and treatment of mental health and disorder. As importantly, they will learn to see how sociocultural forces interact with individual psychology and (neuro)biology to pattern the personal experience of mental suffering and also flourishing. As such, the course builds an analytical framework that considers mental health along three inter-dependent levels of explanation: i. (neuro)biological; ii. individual psychological and experiential; and iii. sociocultural. Some readings deal more exclusively with one of these levels, as in writings by cultural anthropologists treating iii. However, class texts more typically integrate two (or even three) of these levels, as in writings by culturally-minded clinicians referring to themselves as “(trans)cultural psychiatrists,” or by psychiatrically- or psychologically-minded social scientists labeling themselves, for example, “psychiatric/ psychological anthropologists,” who integrate ii. and iii. Other examples of integration would be “biocultural anthropologists” and so-called “neuroanthropologists” (working most directly across levels i. and iii.) and “clinical neuroscientists” and “psychobiologists” (bridging i. and ii.).

Overall, students will learn to construct their own “biopsychocultural” explanations for individual experiences of flourishing and suffering, in an attempt to build more comprehensive, and thus potentially more valid, explanatory models of mental health function and dysfunction. This integrative approach will help students appreciate how the anthropological analysis of mental health can be enriched by biological and psychological/ clinical perspectives. Likewise, students will better appreciate how theories from these scientific fields can be refined through more careful attention to cultural understandings and health disparities characteristic of particular groups and sociocultural contexts.

Research: In part, students will learn about class topics and theories by pursuing their own research projects. Throughout the course, emphasis is placed on “operationalizing” theory—that is, linking theories to specific research questions and empirical measures. With this in mind, the seminar requires that students interview a local individual in order to assess the sociocultural patterning of their life stress and mental well-being. Here, students will follow the McGill Illness Narrative Interview (MINI) protocol, complemented by more standard ethnographic interviewing approaches. Students will transcribe, code, and analyze their interviews. Based on the analysis, students will collaborate in small groups to develop a short “stress and health” survey, which will be distributed to 10-12 individuals. Survey data will be analyzed collaboratively in small groups through perspectives and routines presented in class, such as “cultural consensus” and “cultural consonance” analysis. Lab portfolios comprising various items like interview protocols, transcription, and coding, as well as the survey and its analysis, will contribute to students’ final grades. The overall aim here is to help students develop practical research skills related to culture and mental health, which not only enrich class perspectives but also can be used in real-world medical and clinical settings for research or other applied aims.

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:

- I. Hacking, *Mad Travelers: Reflections on the Reality of Transient Mental Illnesses*
- A. Kleinman, *Rethinking Psychiatry: From Cultural Category to Personal Experience*
- D. Hinton and B. Good, eds., *Culture and Panic Disorder*
- L. Kirmayer, R. Lemelson, and M. Barad, eds., *Understanding Trauma: Integrating Biological, Clinical, and Cultural Perspectives*
- C. Worthman, P. Plotsky, D. Schechter, and C. Cummings, *Formative Experiences: The Interaction of Caregiving, Culture, and Developmental Psychobiology*

Additional readings are found either on electronic reserve through the Morgan Library or on RamCT. Note that readings particularly useful in student research are marked “*M*” for “Methods.”

Assignments and Grading: Overall, I assess your final grade through the following weighting, with more details given our first class meeting and throughout the semester:

- 5 short critical book reviews, due each third week: **25%** (5% each of students’ final grade)
- MINI interview assignment/ portfolio: **15%**
- Group survey portfolio/ in-class presentation: **15%**
- In-class presentation / leading of discussion/ write-up of that week’s reading (each student will do this at least *once* during the course, typically working with others): **10%**
- Weekly seminar participation: **10%**
- Final integrative paper/ presentation on the influence of culture on a particular “transient” or “culture-bound” mental illness (see wk. 13 Kirmayer paper for guidance): **25%**

Note that meaningful participation in weekly 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 other students—demonstrated both in your writing and ideally in your at least occasional comments.

Further Expectations: The course follows a round-table seminar format with intensive discussions, presentations, and in-class exercises. Since this seminar meets only once a week, class absences can jeopardize a student’s grade. 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/>. Finally, students should be aware that the contents of this syllabus – including *assignment due dates* and *assigned readings* – may change. Students are responsible for keeping track of these changes through regular class attendance!

TOPICS AND READINGS

I. Introduction

Week 1: Course Overview: Barriers to a “Global” Mental Health Agenda (Aug. 27)

Video: For and against global mental health: Patel vs. Summerfield

Readings: A. Kleinman. 2009. “Global mental health: A failure of humanity.” *Lancet* 374: 603-4.

A. Kleinman. 2012. “Culture, bereavement, and psychiatry.” *Lancet* 379: 608-9.

P. Collins, V. Patel, S. Joestl. 2011. “Grand challenges in global mental health.” *Nature* 475(27): 27-30.

D. Summerfield. 2008. “How scientifically valid is the knowledge base of global mental health? *BMJ* 336: 992-4

Week 2: “Transient” Mental Illness: From Interpretive to Epidemiological Inquiry (Sept. 3)

Readings: *Mad Travelers*, pp. 1-102 (appendices optional)

- B. Kohrt, C. Hadley, and D. Hrushka. 2009. Editorial, “Culture and epidemiology special issue: Towards an integrated study of culture and population health.” *Annals of Human Biology* 36(3):229-234.
- D. Hrushka. 2009. “Culture as an explanation in population health.” *Annals of Human Biology* 36(3):235-247.
- R. Brown et al. 2009. “Moving from ethnography to epidemiology: Lessons learned from Appalachia.” *Annals of Human Biology* 36(3):248-260.

Week 3: Finding Culture and Stress in Talk: MINI and Ethnographic Interviews (Sept. 10)

Readings: *M* D. Groleau, A. Young, and L. Kirmayer. 2006. “The McGill illness narrative interview (MINI): An interview schedule to elicit meanings and modes of reasoning related to illness experience.” *Transcultural Psychiatry* 43(4): 671-691. (With MINI protocol.)

- *M* J. Spradley. 1979. *The ethnographic interview*. Pp. 55-119. Harcourt Brace.
- *M* R. Levy and D. Hollan. 1998. “Person-Centered Interviewing and Observation.” In: *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*. H. Russell Bernard, ed. Walnut Creek, Cal.: Altamira.
- *M* S. Cohen et al. 1983. “A global measure of perceived stress.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 24(4):385-396. (With “Perceived Stress Scale.”)
- *M* G. Ice and J. Yogo. 2005. “Measuring stress among Luo elders: Development of the Luo perceived stress scale.” *Field Methods* 17(4):394-411.

Book review 1 due

**Part II: The Social Context of Mental Health and Psychiatry:
Differentially Embodying “Depression” in China and Elsewhere**

Week 4: Depression and Neurasthenia in China (Sept. 17)

Readings: *Rethinking Psychiatry*, Preface, Prologue, pp. 1-52

- Kleinman et al. 1978. “Culture, Illness, and Care: Clinical Lessons from Anthropologic and Cross-Cultural Research.” *Annals of Internal Medicine* Vol. 88.
- A. Kleinman. 1986. “Social Origins of Distress and Disease: Depression, Neurasthenia, and Pain in Modern China.” *Current Anthropology* 27(5):499-509.
- D. Lee, J. Kleinman, A. Kleinman. 2007. “Rethinking depression: An ethnographic study of the experiences of depression among Chinese.” *Harvard Review of Psychiatry* Jan./Feb.: 1-8.

Week 5: Methods: Finding Mental Health “Explanatory Models”/ “Schemas” in Talk (Sept. 24)

Readings: *Rethinking Psychiatry*, pp. 53-107

- *M* N. Quinn. 2005. “How to reconstruct schemas people share, from what they say.” In: *Finding culture in talk: A collection of methods*. Pp. 35-81.
- *M* A. Strauss and J. Corbin. 1998. *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing a grounded theory*. Pp. 101-161.

Week 6: Mind-Body “Looping” and Somatic Syndromes (Oct. 1)

Readings: *Rethinking Psychiatry*, pp. 108-185

- L.J. Kirmayer and N. Sartorius. 2007. “Cultural models and somatic syndromes.” *Psychosomatic Medicine* 69:832-40.
- B. Kohrt et al. 2004. “Distribution of distress in post-socialist Mongolia: A cultural epidemiology of *yadargaa*.” *Social Science & Medicine* 58: 471-485.

Interview analysis: workshop

Book review 2 due

III: The Sociocultural Determinants of Mental Health: Towards a Formal “Cultural Consonance” Approach to Panic (and Other) Disorders

Week 7: Social Determinants of Health Inequalities: Cultural Consensus Applications (Oct. 8)

Readings: *Culture and Panic Disorder*, Intro pages, Introduction, Part I

M. Marmot. 2006. “Health in an unequal world.” *Lancet* 368: 2081-94.

V. Patel and A. Kleinman. 2003. “Poverty and common mental disorders in developing countries.” *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 81(8): 609-615.

M S. Weller. 2007. “Cultural consensus theory: Applications and frequently asked questions.” *Field Methods* 19(4):339-368

Week 8: Historical Perspectives on Western Panic: Cultural Consonance Applications (Oct. 15)

Readings: *Culture and Panic Disorder*, Part II

M W. Dressler. 1998. “Culture, Socioeconomic Status, and Physical and Mental Health in Brazil.” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 12(4):424-46.

M W. Dressler et al. 2005. “Measuring cultural consonance: Examples with special reference to measurement theory in anthropology.” *Field Methods* 17(4):331-355.

Research Project 1 Due, Interview Analysis

Week 9: Cultural Variations in Panic Disorder: Cultural Consonance, cont. (Oct. 22)

Readings: *Culture and Panic Disorder*, Part III

J. Snodgrass et al. 2013. “A formal anthropological view of motivation models of problematic MMO play: Achievement, social, and immersion factors in the context of culture.” *Transcultural Psychiatry* 50(2): 235-262.

M. Balieiro et al. 2011. “Does perceived stress mediate the effect of cultural consonance on depression?” *Transcultural Psychiatry* 48(5):519-538.

Book review 3 due

IV. Integrating Biological, Clinical, and Cultural Perspectives in Mental Health: Traumatic Experiences from the POV of a “Biocultural” Psychiatry

Week 10: Neurobiological/ Biocultural Perspectives on Trauma and Health (Oct. 29)

Readings: *Understanding Trauma*, Introduction, Section 1

W. Dressler. 2005. “What’s cultural about biocultural research?” *Ethos* 33(1):20-45.

C. Gravlee. 2009. “How race becomes biology: Embodiment of social inequality.” *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 139:47-57.

M C. Worthman and J. Costello. 2009. “Tracking biocultural pathways in population health: The value of biomarkers.” *Annals of Human Biology* 36(3):281-297

Week 11: Clinical Perspectives on Trauma (Nov. 5)

Readings: *Understanding Trauma*, Section 2

P. Bracken et al. 2012. “Psychiatry beyond the current paradigm.” *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 201: 430-434.

T. McDade. 2002. “Status incongruity in Samoan youth: A biocultural analysis of culture change, stress, and immune function.” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 16(2):123-150.

Survey analysis: workshop

Week 12: Cultural Perspectives on Trauma: Toward an Integrative Approach (Nov. 12)

Readings: *Understanding Trauma*, Section 3

K. Kendler. 2012. "Levels of explanation in psychiatric and substance use disorders." *Molecular Psychiatry* 17: 11-21.

K. Kendler. 2011. "What kinds of things are psychiatric disorders?" *Psychological Medicine* 41: 1143-1150.

****Book review 4 due****

**V. Toward a Developmental Psychobiology of Mental Suffering and Resilience:
The Allure of Epigenetics**

Week 13: Epigenetic Foundations (Nov. 19)

Readings: *Formative Experiences*, Sections 1 & 2

M. Lock. 2013. "The lure of the epigenome." *Lancet* 381: 1896-7.

(For final papers in particular) L. Kirmayer & L. Swartz. 2013. "Culture and global mental health." To appear in *Global mental health: Principles and Practice*. W. Patel et al. eds.. OUP.

****Research Project 2 Due, Group Cultural Consensus/ Consonance Analysis****

Week 14: ** Thanksgiving Break, November 23-Dec.1, No Classes!** (rec: Work on Final Papers!, use wk. 13 Kirmayer chapter as guide)

Week 15: Childhood and Inter-Generational Formative Experiences (Dec. 3)

Readings: *Formative Experiences*, Sections 3 & 4

Week 16: Toward a New Integrative Science of Health Resilience: Research, Clinical, and Policy Implications (Dec. 10)

Readings: *Formative Experiences*, Sections 5 & 6

****Book review 5 due****

****Final papers and portfolios due: Dec. 17th, 5pm****

****Final presentations: To be scheduled the week of Dec. 16-20****