Culture & Mental Health: Decolonizing the Psyche

Hampshire College NS 217, Fall 2021
Tuesdays and Thursday, 9:00 – 10:20 am, CSC 333

Professor: Felicity Aulino
Office Hours: After class Thursdays in CSC, or by Zoom appointment

Course Description
Are psychiatric disease categories and treatment protocols universally applicable? How can we come to understand the lived experience of mental illness and abnormality? And how can we trace the roots of such experience – whether through brain circuitry, cultural practices, forms of power, or otherwise? In this course, we will draw on psychological anthropology, cultural psychiatry, science studies, and decolonizing methodologies to examine mental health and illness in terms of subjective experience, social processes, and knowledge production. Our goal will be to recognize the centrality of the social world as a force that defines and drives the incidence, occurrence, and course of mental illness, as well as to appreciate the complex relationship between professional and personal accounts of disorder.

Objectives
In this course, I aim for your to:
1. Think.
2. Work collaboratively.
3. Begin to see the contours of the field of psychological anthropology and related disciplines.
4. Investigate lived experience – what it is like for other people to be alive; how they make meaning; what matters to them; and what shapes the contours of their daily lives, including local and global influences, past and present.
5. Consider your own experience – who you are, what you desire, what you consider normal – in new ways in relation to social forces.
6. Experiment with social theory – what it can help you see and what it may obfuscate.
7. Develop a toybox of theories and practices to help identify and displace colonial, imperialist, antiblack, and white supremacist logics latent in psychological scholarship and public life.
8. Read and write more effectively as a tool for thinking.
9. Find ways to read, watch, and listen to a large quantity of materials in a short amount of time.
10. Confront ethical challenges.
11. Express new ideas in a variety of stages – from the not yet formed to the fully cooked.
12. Explore an independent research topic and think through how to approach ethnographic work.
13. Have some fun with class and appreciate the luxury of thinking and discussing it affords.

* Draft syllabus, will change as we progress.
Course Requirements

1. Attendance and participation (25-30%)
   * Attendance at and active participation in discussions
   * Completion of assigned readings prior to class discussions

2. Weekly response papers (25-30%)
   * 1 page, 500-word max. Include word count at top with your names and lead author.
   * Written jointly in teams of three, rotating “lead author” weekly
   * Due Thursdays before class*; detailed guidelines on Moodle

3. Class presentation (10%)
   * Work as part of a team to briefly present readings and kick off discussion

4. Final Project (in the form of a research proposal) (20%)
   * Proposal for research on a topic not covered in-depth in class.

5. Proposal for Final Project (proposal proposal) (10%)
   * Written proposal (can be in outline form) that answers the who, what, where, when, and why of your imagined research plan. This should include at least one key term from the course and a preliminary reference list.

6. Portfolio (10%)
   * Compilation of all your work, along with a reflection on your efforts and a final summary statement. Please include the title of your favorite reading and what you could have perhaps done without.

A couple additional notes

- Technology: Please refrain from texting and other non-course related use of computers/phones while in class. If we ever go to online sessions, please keep your camera on if at all possible. This will be but one part of our work to build and sustain a healthy and happy environment for learning and growing, in the midst of these trying times.

- Accommodations: Please request accommodation often and early. It is never too late to request accommodations – our bodies and circumstances are continuously changing. I may ask you to make use of formal accessibility services on campus and/or be in contact with your Dean of Students, but will never demand you disclose personal information, medical or otherwise. If there are ways in which the overall structure of the course and general classroom interactions could be adapted to facilitate full participation, please raise your ideas with the professor: comments and suggestions about the format of readings, lectures, and class discussions are always welcome.
Due Dates

- Thursdays before class (or latest, by noon) – team reflections
- Wednesday, October 13 – project proposal proposal
- Wednesday, December 15 – final project and portfolio

Class Sessions

Week 1: Openings
Week 2: Diagnostics I
Week 3: Crazy Like Us?
Week 4: Century of the Self
Week 5: Violence and Carceral Logics
Week 6: Diagnostics II
Week 7: Pharma
Week 8*: Language... or Psycho-Racio-Linguistics? Fanon, Lacan, and Rosa
Week 9*: Sylvia Wynter & Decolonizing Psychiatry
Week 10: Generational Shifts
Week 11: Schizophrenia and Psychosis
Week 12: Naikan
Week 13: Thanksgiving
Week 14: PTSD
Week 15: Psychopolitics … and moving onward!

The Details

You are responsible for reading prior to class. Please consider the syllabus as one of your readings each week. (I will keep the Moodle totally up to date, with links to the syllabus as it develops over the course of the semester. The following is a starting offering!) You’ll note that I will almost always list more than we will discuss! Some are listed simply to help you see the contours of the field, some are recommended for future use, some may help you develop your project proposals, etc... In any case, please read through all the materials listed for each class!!

Week 1: Openings

Thurs., Sept. 2

Readings

  - Don’t get hung up on the literary criticism details, get the gist
  - --skim this for broad contours of the culture and personality school
  - --read pages 2 – 11 on subjectivity, postcolonial, and disorders
  o --*skim this for context.*

**Week 2: Diagnostics I**

**Tues., Sept. 7**

*Readings*


*Syllabus teaching moment:* There are many important works that can help you understand the hierarchies of value latent in academia and other currents of knowledge production and circulation. Here are a couple scholarly sources that shed light on the imperialism, antiblackness, and colonialism inherent in the theories and research paradigms by which so many of us learn and act, and that also bring alternative possibilities into view:


  - Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, 2013. *The Undercommons*. See pages 25 – 43?

*Another syllabus teaching moment:* There are so many ways to read the history of psychological anthropology. The following are recommended, at least to know they exist, or to have other places to go as you deepen you quest.


**Thurs., Sept. 9**

*Readings*

  o --*Read Intro pages 1-6 and 9-11*
  o --*Read or at least skim Chapter 3, “Cerebralizing Distress”*
  o --*Available as an e-book, check out as much as you want!*
  o --Read “Ecology is Everything”

*If we had another week, we might read:*


### Week 3: Crazy Like US?

**Tues., Sept. 14**

**Readings**

  o (is listening intriguing? infuriating? in a productive way?)
  o I had been thinking of assigning ch. 4 “The Mega-Marketing of Depression in Japan” and then went with the podcast. (That chapter a good link to pharma conversation too) Discuss?
  o As you listen, please recall your reading from the first class, parts of the Intro to “Postcolonial Disorders: Reflections on Subjectivity in the Contemporary World.”

**Thurs., Sept. 16 NO CLASS, Yom Kippur**

### Week 4: Century of the Self

**Tues., Sept. 21**

“Readings”

- Adam Curtis documentary. *Century of the Self*. Focus on parts 1 – 3: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJ3RzGoQC4s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJ3RzGoQC4s)


*Syllabus teaching moment:* There is work that takes on the domineering figures at the roots of psychiatry and psychology – historical accounts that seek to place those figures’ ideas in social context, including exploring the antiblackness and antisemitism that finds its way into foundational work. You might, for instance, consult:

There are no heroes in our account, not in a “pure” sense. (See even Aurora Levins Morales’ self-disclosure in her stories.) Do you yearn for such?

**Thurs., Sept. 23 NO CLASS (advising day)**

**Week 5: Violence and Carceral Logics**

**Tues., Sept. 28**

**Readings**

  - --read preface and introduction
  - --this is an ebook. Take a look through it and read another chapter too.

  [https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-014-9402-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-014-9402-y)

**Thurs., Sept. 30**

**Readings**

  - --Read Preface (Nowhere to Hid) and Chapter 1 (The ER Doc: Who’s Calling the Shots?)

**Recommended**

- Katie Kilroy-Marac, “The Legacy of French Colonial Psychiatry”:
  [https://africasacountry.com/2021/06/the-legacy-of-french-colonial-psychiatry?fbclid=IwAR2uChVtQLe_BYyM94NVCrDzgLzkbQPZap-m7OHtmp1R8Wly50qFpgVxGl](https://africasacountry.com/2021/06/the-legacy-of-french-colonial-psychiatry?fbclid=IwAR2uChVtQLe_BYyM94NVCrDzgLzkbQPZap-m7OHtmp1R8Wly50qFpgVxGl)

**Week 6: Diagnostics II**

**Tues., Oct. 5**

**Readings**

- Prentis Hemphill
  Street Somatics: Tips for Regulating Nervous Systems in Uprisings:
  [https://www.instagram.com/p/CA3RW0uA8CW/?fbclid=IwAR1RLTI550APEDcgeSfdscrgF5o5qt4UTkXuOG_EMktTgkl-ZEtZVfE4av8](https://www.instagram.com/p/CA3RW0uA8CW/?fbclid=IwAR1RLTI550APEDcgeSfdscrgF5o5qt4UTkXuOG_EMktTgkl-ZEtZVfE4av8)


- Or MAYBE this instead?: Erica James, “Haunting Ghosts: Madness, Gender, and Ensekirite in Haiti in the Democratic Era.” In *Postcolonial Disorders*. 
Thurs., Oct. 7

Readings


Week 7: Pharma

Tues., Oct. 12 NO CLASS, Oct. break

Trying to come up with a topic you want to explore in a final project? Maybe these will help pique your interest.

- Nirmala Erevelles, Disability and Difference in Global Contexts
- Andrew Wooyoung Kim, “How Should We Study Intergenerational Trauma?”: http://somatosphere.net/2020/intergenerational-trauma-birth-cohort-study-south-africa.html/
- Psychiatry Beyond Fanon: https://africasacountry.com/series/psychiatry-beyond-fanon

Thurs., Oct. 14

Readings


- “Graphic Medicine: how autobiographical comic artists are changing our understanding of illness.” August 10, 2021, the conversation:
  - https://theconversation.com/graphic-medicine-how-autobiographical-comics-artists-are-changing-our-understanding-of-illness-164789?fbclid=IwAR0c-QhDCNbdRHWdhvp_VUFSD_JZFvuZ4DP2jsOnYbUIZLcYs-cCrGOr6PQ

- “Interoception: the hidden sense that shapes wellbeing.” August 15, 2021, The Guardian:
  - https://www.theguardian.com/science/2021/aug/15/the-hidden-sense-shaping-your-wellbeing-interoception?fbclid=IwAR2t1gkTIS5MqXNRPGItjio_25m-4FQM4L0KT92U7kTe4grKFs3GSMt4Tttg

Recommended

- Janis Jenkins. “Cultural Chemistry in the Clozapine Clinic.” Chapter 1 from Extraordinary Conditions: Culture and Experience in Mental Illness. UC Pres 2015. (ebook)
This is really good, but not as fun a read as Martin. Important perspective though, of interest?

New Yorker piece on being on drugs and weaning off?

**PS Do you know this?**

**Week 8: Language... or Psycho-Racio-Linguistics? Fanon, Lacan, and Rosa**

**Tues., Oct. 19**

*Readings*
  - Pay particular attention to 18-29, 33, 41, 43, 51, 143, 165 (read what you need to to help these elements land). I’m assigning this because I feel we need some background on what Lacanian theory is in order to get the most out of Fanon this week, as well as other work we will continue to read inspired therefrom... But this is not a class on Lacan... So don’t go crazy)

- Frantz Fanon, 2008 (1952). *Black Skin, White Masks*. Grove Press
  - Foreword by Kwame Anthony Appiah
  - Introduction
  - Chapter One: The Black Man and Language

*Recommended:
- For background on Fanon, why we read him, why others read him:
- You might want to take a look, just for fun, at Gilles Deleuze’s “Preface to the Italian Edition of A Thousand Plateaus”, because it has a nice way of saying how they wanted to get rid of the Oedipus complex and how they failed...

**Thurs., Oct. 21**

*Readings*
- Jonathan Rosa’s Master Class, “Unsettling Race and Language: Toward a Raciolinguistic Perspective: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fm1CKzdSvhs


*Recommended*
• Film: *One Flew Over Cuckoo’s Nest*, directed by Milos Forman, 1975

**Week 9: Sylvia Wynter & Decolonizing Psychiatry**

**Tues., Oct. 26**

*Readings*

- Sylvia Wynter 1999. """"Towards the Sociogenic Principle: Fanon, The Puzzle of Conscious Experience, of 'Identity' and What it's like to be 'Black'
  - Part Two focus

**Thurs., Oct. 28**

*Readings*

- Sylvia Wynter 1999. """"Towards the Sociogenic Principle: Fanon, The Puzzle of Conscious Experience, of 'Identity' and What it's like to be 'Black'
  - Part Three

*Recommended for more:*


  - *This is a lot. Really, the Wynter will be the main point of discussion this entire week. The pieces for today will hopefully be useful for thinking with this work!*

Syllabus overload. I know this week is already too much. But...

And if we had more time, another week on this tip, we’d read from Frank B. Wildernson III, 2020, *Afropessimism*.

Including: Ch. 1 “For Halloween I Washed My Face” & “Epilogue – the new century”
- Maybe also ch. 5 “the trouble with humans, part 1”
- Pages 240-241 on fanon’s two different books... hmmm
- Chapter 2, hard core...

*Syllabus teaching moment?:* Curious about Afropessimism ? Check these starter hits out:
- “The Future is Black: Afropessimism, Fugitivity, and Radical Hope in Education,” edited by Carl A. Grant, Ashley N. Woodson, Michael J. Dumas.
- “Doing Time in the (Psychic) Commons,” *Frank B. Wilderson III*
- Could perhaps watch this interview?: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HvVsgvHa0AE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HvVsgvHa0AE)

**Week 10: Generational Shifts**

**Tues., Nov. 2**

*Readings*

  - Read Chapter 4: *A Soul Adrift*.
  - Read the Coda

For my synopsis of the book:


**Thurs., Nov. 4**

No class in person this day... read and discuss the following:


**Week 11: Schizophrenia and Psychosis**

**Tues., Nov. 9**

*Readings*

  - If you like (though not required), you can also listen to Esmé Wang reading from The Collected Schizophrenias: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vw6GFEm1BOg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vw6GFEm1BOg)

- A Tale of Mental Illness – From the Inside:
  - [https://www.ted.com/talks/elyn_saks_a_tale_of_mental_illness_from_the_inside](https://www.ted.com/talks/elyn_saks_a_tale_of_mental_illness_from_the_inside)

- The Voices in My Head:
  - [https://www.ted.com/talks/eleanor_longden_the Voices_in_my_head](https://www.ted.com/talks/eleanor_longden_the Voices_in_my_head)

*Recommended, for those so inclined*

  - --read *False Memories: Trauma and Liberation*, 55 – 68 (Will this prompt a critical conversation about memories? Perhaps)
  - --ebook! Whole thing is available, check this out!

**Thurs., Nov. 11**

*Readings*

• Page 104 (middle of the page) – 111.

  - Read the first two pages to get the main argument. (And of course feel free to read further if your interest is piqued.)

*Recommended*

**Week 12: Naikan**

**Tues., Nov. 16**
*Readings*
  - *First half*

**Thurs., Nov. 18**
*Readings*
  - *Rest of the book*

**Week 13: Thanksgiving**
No class!

**Week 14: PTSD**

**Tues., Nov. 30**
*Readings*

**Thurs., Dec. 2**
  - *We may want to read the Introduction as well, important background.*
  - *In fact, the entire book is available as an ebook – check it out!*
Week 15: Psychopolitics ... and moving onward!

Tues., Dec. 7
Readings
  - Read chapters 1 (The Crisis of Freedom) and 6 (Healing as Killing)
  - Or read the whole book if you are so inspired!
  Watch here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOJgMK21-tk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOJgMK21-tk)

Thurs., Dec. 9 Last class
- *Bring it!*