Global Mental Health
ANTH 310

Fall 2014
T,Th 8-9:50am
260 Condon Hall

Professor: Dr. Sara Lewis
Office Hours: Tues, 10-11am and by appointment
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Course description:
The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that the incidence of depression is rapidly on
the rise, particularly in low and middle-income countries. Other studies by the WHO show that
recovery rates from schizophrenia are much better in low-income countries compared with those
observed in the United States. This course grapples with quandaries such as these to explore the
theory, practice and methods employed in the study of global mental health. To investigate this
interdisciplinary landscape, this course draws heavily on postcolonial studies and empirical
ethnographic inquiry to consider the effects of globalization, and how social, economic and
political inequality shape the experience of mental health across global populations. We will
explore topics such as refugee mental health, global pharmaceutical trade, and the relationship
between biomedical categories and local idioms of distress. Integral to our exploration will be an
interrogation of the term “global”; we consider why some voices are heard above others and how
the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness may reveal insidious power structures and
disparities across race, gender, sexuality and class. This course is highly interdisciplinary and
appropriate for students in anthropology, international studies, psychology, as well as ethnic and
area studies.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:
• Utilize critical social theory to understand core debates in global mental health.
• Identify how culture shapes concepts of mental illness, and how this changes over time.
• Explain how social inequality and health disparities impact mental health.
• Generate multiple interpretations of illness or “abnormal” behavior (i.e. move away from
thinking of mental illness as either biomedical disease, or a cultural construction).
• Outline how globalization has changed healthcare in the United States and across the
globe.
Course Expectation and Grades:

Attendance and Participation, 15%
Reflection Papers (end of week 2 and 7), 10% each for a total of 20%
Midterm Project (end of week 5), 25%
Final Paper (due December 10), 40%

Below is a rubric to help you understand grading in the Department of Anthropology. There is no extra credit.

A+: Quality of student’s performance significantly exceeds all requirements and expectations required for an A grade. Very few, if any, students receive this grade in a given course.

A: Quality of performance is outstanding relative to that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at the highest level.

B: Quality of performance is significantly above that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at a high level.

C: Quality of performance meets the course requirements in every respect; demonstrates adequate understanding of course content.

D: Quality of performance is at the minimal level necessary to pass the course, but does not fully meet the course requirements; demonstrates a marginal understanding of course content.

F: Quality of performance in the course is unacceptable and does not meet the course requirements; demonstrates an inadequate understanding of course content.

Accommodations

Please contact Professor Lewis during the first week of the term should you require accommodations.

Class Culture

The culture of this class is based on mutual respect, decorum, and a sense of openness and curiosity. You may use laptop computers and tablets as you see fit, however please be sure to bring a pencil and paper to every class, which we will often use for in-class exercises. Lectures will be highly interactive and students will be called upon at random. Members of the class are welcome and encouraged to email the professor with questions. However, you may be redirected to attend office hours should your question require a more involved response.
Academic Honesty

The following actions may result in disciplinary action according to the university’s academic honesty policies:
--Evidence of collusion when expected to submit individual work (working with someone else).
--Evidence of plagiarism (using someone else’s work without proper citation).
--Multiple submissions (submitting the same paper for more than one class).

Attendance and class participation (15%)

This course is heavily focused on critical analysis, which will largely be accomplished on a collaborative basis as a class. Therefore, simply doing the readings is not sufficient participation. I do not distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate absences so it is strongly recommended you do not miss class in case an urgent situation arises. You may miss 3 classes without penalty. Missing 4 or more sessions will result in a reduced participation grade.

For every day an assignment is late, you will lose 1/3 of your grade (e.g. a paper that earns a B becomes a B-).

Beginning in Week 2, each student will give a 10-minute “introduction to class.” The quality of your introduction will be graded as part of your participation grade.

Reflection papers (10% each for a total of 20%)

Due at the end of weeks 2 and 7

You will complete two reflection papers over the course of the term. Each paper should be approximately 700 words and will draw upon course readings. Your reflection should not summarize readings in a “book report” format, but rather be used as an opportunity to explore analytic concepts. I encourage you to take intellectual risks in thinking through your ideas. What is thought-provoking about the readings? How do they challenge your own notions of mental health? How is knowledge about particular illnesses produced, and how do disparities and inequality shape this knowledge? What is obscured in the readings? What is illuminated by them?

Midterm Project (25%)

Your project is due in class at the end of week 5.

Drawing on Ian Hacking’s “Making up People,” you will analyze particular “kinds” of people. Your data come from a variety of sources: media, texts and informal fieldwork. Your task is to identify a certain “kind” of person, which you will investigate and explore with a curious and critical eye. You will be given class time on October 9 to conduct an informal fieldwork
assignment. In addition, you will collect a variety of media sources (e.g. newspaper and magazine articles, YouTube videos, film clips) that depict the kinds or types of people you investigate. Hacking gives examples of various sorts of people: those who identify as heterosexual, those diagnosed with autism, and others. The phenomenon of “adolescence,” or “teenagers,” is fairly recent, suggesting that, indeed, this category was “made up,” at a particular point in history. Be creative! And use this assignment as an opportunity to explore an area that interests you. You can even create your own category of person what has yet to be discovered. You are expected to gather 5-7 sources in addition to your fieldwork data.

Each student will create his or her own unique multi-media analysis. You will write a 1500-word essay analyzing your collection in light of Hacking’s essay. Your paper may address the following: How do you know these people are of a certain kind or type? How do others relate to them? Do these individuals seem to self-identify as their kind/type, or is this a label merely bestowed upon them? Does the label seem to hinder them? Give them clout? Does it seem morally neutral? How does the portrayal of this “type” of person change across your selection of texts and media? What does each have in common?

You are encouraged to include images or links to videos in your papers. In addition to your paper you will give a 5-7 minute presentation to the class where you showcase your work. PowerPoint presentations are a great way to show off your collection. You might also choose to use Wordpress or other online platform to gather your images, videos, and textual excerpts.

Final Paper (40%): Submitted to Blackboard by Dec 10 at 11:59pm

Final papers are research-based essays that are 2500-words, not including references. Please use one citation style consistently throughout the paper. To best help you engage your interests, a few approaches to the final project are offered. You are encouraged, but not required, to submit a short proposal that outlines your plan.

1) Write a research-based essay on a topic of choice. You may expand on a course topic, or pursue a related topic of interest within the scope of global mental health. You are expected to draw upon course readings, which provide evidence and support a critical examination of your topic. In keeping with the aims of our class, the essay should not be simply a “report,” where you passively collect information. Rather, you should develop a research question or problem which requires your own analysis to draw conclusions.

2) Write a research-based essay on how culture has reshaped our understanding of a given mental illness (e.g. depression, schizophrenia, autism). You can discuss how the illness has changed in one or more regions of the world, but you are expected to focus on how culture has shaped and reshaped the definition and/or treatment of the disorder over time. Use course readings to guide your analysis.

3) Focus on one aspect of the World Health Organization’s Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020. Drawing on course readings and additional research you conduct
for this paper, write an essay that considers what is promising and what is problematic about the WHO’s strategic plan.

**Course Readings:**

Course Packets and books can be purchased at the UO Bookstore:


**WEEK ONE**: Introduction to Global Mental Health
Sept 30, Oct 2

**READING:**


**WEEK TWO**: Local and Global
Oct 7,9

**READING:**


**DUE: Reflection Paper #1 in class on Thursday**
WEEK THREE: Mental Illness in a Global World
Oct 14, 16


WEEK FOUR: Syndemics
Oct 21, 23

READING:

Mendenhall, Emily. *Syndemic Suffering: Social Distress, Depression and Diabetes Among Mexican Immigrant Women*.

WEEK FIVE: Pharmaceuticals and Global Measurement
Oct 28, 30

READING:


**DUE: Midterm project due in class on Thursday**
WEEK SIX: *Recovery, Resilience, and the Anthropology of the Good*
Nov 4,6

READING:


WEEK SEVEN: *Race and Mental Health in America*
Nov 11,13

READING:


**DUE: Reflection Paper #2 due in class on Thursday**

WEEK EIGHT: *Zones of the Marginal*
Nov 18, 20

READING:


WEEK NINE: Mental Health and Spirituality  
Nov 25

READING:


WEEK TEN: Re-Thinking Global Mental Health  
Dec 2,4

READING:


**Final paper submitted to Blackboard by Dec 10 at 11:59pm**