

# **CULTURE AND MENTAL HEALTH**

## **WINTER TERM, 2014**

### **MW 2-3:20**

### **101 LLCS**

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(You are responsible for checking <http://blackboard.uoregon.edu/> for updates)

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#### **Course Assistants (for contact information and office hours, see Blackboard):**

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#### **Overview**

*"As powerful an influence as the culture of the Hmong patient and her family is on this case, the culture of biomedicine is equally powerful. If you can't see that your own culture has its own set of interests, emotions, and biases, how can you expect to deal successfully with someone else's culture?"*

--medical anthropologist Arthur Kleinman, quoted in *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*

*Culture and Mental Health* is a class that explores the role of culture in the definition and maintenance of mental health and "mental illness". We will be exploring what our culture and various cultures of the world have to say about mental health, mental illness, and treatment of mental illness. We will be addressing questions like the following:

- What is a mental illness? Do different cultures define it differently? What is meant by culture, anyway?
- Are there different kinds of mental illnesses in different cultures of the world?
- Does depression look different in China than it does here?
- Does Schizophrenia occur all over the world?
- How do different cultures approach the healing of mental illness?

#### **Contact Hours and Class Attendance**

The class meets each Monday and Wednesday in 101LLCS and your attendance is expected. This is not a course to take if you think you will miss more than one class meeting, as class discussion, exams, and exercises are crucial to your success in the course. Also, you will be working in a small group in class and will be completing various activities in your small group. Your participation is part of the course requirements. I also recommend that you check the course website at Blackboard at least twice a week, as I may post important course information.

#### **Required Text:**

Watters, E. (2010) *Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche*. Free Press.

## Additional Required Readings

Additional readings are on the Blackboard site and are assigned on a weekly basis. Readings are to be completed BEFORE the Monday class meeting for which they are assigned. There are two required text books, available at the bookstore, along with on line readings available on the Blackboard website. This course has a serious amount of reading and you will not be able to do well on the quizzes or essays if you do not do the reading.

## Grading:

Your grade will be computed by combining your scores in the following overall categories for a total of 175:

Points	Course Work
45	3 Quizzes, 15 points each
70	Reading Essays (8 essays; each worth 10 points, drop the lowest score)
40	Final Paper/Project
20	Participation (in-class small group and discussion board)
175	<b>Total</b>
(EC)	Also up to 10 points extra credit potential (see below)

Final letter grades will be approximately determined from point totals as follows:

points	letter grade
157-175	A
140-156	B
122-139	C
105-121	D
Below 105	F

Based on the actual distribution of final grades, *this criterion might be relaxed, but not stiffened.*

## Quizzes: 45 points

Three quizzes will be given. Each quiz will be worth 15 points. The quizzes will be structured to assess your knowledge of the readings, *in-class films and lectures*, and class discussions. They will be short answer exams that will primarily pertain to the readings assigned for the weeks in which the exam is given. Other questions will pertain to the previous weeks' readings, classroom discussion, lecture, and/or demonstrations. I will post a study guide on the Friday before each quiz.

## Reading Essays 70 points (THE LOWEST ESSAY SCORE WILL BE DROPPED.)

Written essays must be typed (or computer printed) and one essay must be turned in on the 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 9<sup>th</sup> Mondays at the beginning of class. If you absolutely cannot type or computer-print your essay, you must write it very neatly on nice paper (e.g.: no pages written from a spiral notebook!). Each essay should show you have put thought into the reading material, and be designed to stimulate thoughtful class

discussion about the reading and/or related issues. Think of these reading essays as an opportunity to think about the readings, to reflect on the meaning of the material to you and your life and how it might affect society in general.

***I will provide some specific topics to write about for each week. Each essay will be worth up to 10 points.***

***A point will be subtracted for each day late, starting with Mondays at 12:15. Do not email essays or slip them under my door. Please turn late essays into the main psychology office, room 131 Straub!***

See Guideline for essays posted on the assignments section of Blackboard for specific information on writing the essays.

## **Final Paper/Project: 40 points**

Your final paper/project for this class will be one of three things:

(1) You are working in a community mental health clinic in an area that has a lot of people from a different culture (you get to pick what culture, e.g., Hispanic, Asian, Hmong, Puerto Rican, etc.). The psychiatric staff is not aware of the effect of culture on the patients' mental state. Your project is to design some sort of educational intervention for the staff. It might be a brochure or newsletter; an outline for a workshop; an internet learning experience; etc. Use your imagination!

*It should contain the amount of information in a 5-7 page paper.*

**[On this one, it is recommended that you work in pairs or groups of 3. Just make sure your final produce is 2 to 3 times the length and work!]**

OR

(2) Write a 5-7 page paper on the role of self and culture in a *specific mental illness*. This "mental illness" might be one from our culture (anorexia, for example) or one from another culture that you have learned about (for example susto or neurasthenia). You must have 5 references that are peer reviewed (e.g., a journal article from a psychological or anthropological journal). Other references can be the articles used in class, web sites, blogs and magazine articles.

OR

(3) A case study of a person with a culture bound illness, and how the person might be seen from other cultural settings.

***THE FINAL PROJECT IS DUE ON MONDAY, MARCH 10<sup>th</sup>, AT CLASS!***

## **Participation: 20 points**

Participation is crucial in this course. *Participation includes in class discussion and on-line discussion on Blackboard.* You are required to read the Discussion boards and post at least twice a week. In-class participation will largely be in the form of small groups. You will work with a group throughout the quarter and assigned activities will be turned in to track attendance.

### **On-Line discussion**

We will have an electronic discussion as part of this course on the Blackboard discussion forum. You are expected to read and post in the on-line discussions. Posting will count for participation credit if your messages are thoughtful and original.

## **Extra Credit Up to 10 points**

Extra Credit can be earned in a variety of ways up to 10 extra points total. If you make especially valuable contributions to class discussion, or if you make especially valuable contributions to the email discussion, you may earn extra points. Or you can get extra credit for a particularly terrific project. This might include a special presentation, if you are interested. In general, if you do something creative, special, contributive, and above-and-beyond the course requirements, you may earn extra credit.

## One further note on psychiatric medications

You will find in this course many different ways of thinking about and treating what we call mental “disorders”. Many approaches to mental illness do not emphasize medications the way that our culture does. I recognize that many of you may be taking such drugs, and if you feel that you need to question or change your regimen, you must do so **ONLY** with consent and cooperation of the person prescribing the medication.

## Weekly Schedule: Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines

- Readings are to be completed *before* the Monday class that week.
- *EW is the Watters book*
- ***There are on-line readings almost every week. It is your responsibility to check!***

<b>Week 1: Introduction: Why Culture? How do we define mental health and mental illness today?</b>			
	<i>Topics</i>		
January 6	Exploring our culture’s ideas about mental health and mental illness. How the system works today.		
<b>Week 2: How culture interacts with clinical reality</b>			
	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Assignments</i>
1/13	Paradigms and Phenomenology. How culture determines how we see things.	On line readings	<b>Essay #1 due</b> You should do the on line readings for week 2 before writing your essay.
1/15			
<b>Week 3: Culture, Eating Disorders and Psychosomatics</b>			
	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings</i>	
1/20	<b><i>NO CLASS! MLK Day!</i></b>	EW pp. 1-63 and on line readings	
1/22	Eating disorders, Discourse		<b>Essay #2 due</b>
<b>Week 4: Anxiety, Dissociation and PTSD</b>			
	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings</i>	
1/27	PTSD and Trauma—how we	EW pp. 65-125 and on line readings	<b>Essay #3 due</b>

	cope around the world		
1/29			<b>Quiz #1</b>
<b>Week 5: Schizophrenia and the Psychoses</b>			
	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings</i>	
2/3	Schizophrenia—or why there are better outcomes in the developing world	EW pp. 127-185 and on line readings	<b>Essay #4 due</b>
2/5			
<b>Week 6: Depression and Culture</b>			
	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings</i>	
2/10	Depression—the rise of the medical model and pharmaceutical companies	EW pp. 187-255 and on line readings	<b>Essay #5 due</b>
2/12			
<b>Week 7: The role of prejudice and subjectivity</b>			
	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings</i>	
2/17	Mental Health, Stereotyping, and over-pathologizing	EW chapter 4	<b>Essay #6 due</b>
2/19			<b>Quiz #2</b>
<b>Week 8: Healing across Cultures</b>			
	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings</i>	
2/24			<b>Essay #7 due</b>
2/26			
<b>Week 9: More healing</b>			
	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings</i>	

3/3			<b>Essay #8 due</b>
3/5			
<b>Week 10: Summing up</b>			
	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings</i>	
3/10		EW Conclusion	<b>Final Project due</b>
3/12			<b>Quiz #3</b>

***NO FINAL EXAM OR CLASS DURING FINALS WEEK!!!!***

## **Resources and Notes:**

### **Psychology Peer Advisors**

The Psychology Peer Advisors are available for academic advising most times of most days. You can find them in room 162B of the Franklin Building, so be sure to go by to say hello and get advice on courses for psychology majors.

### **University Teaching and Learning Center**

The TLC offers Services courses to help you study and learn better, workshops, appointments, math and writing labs, tutoring, standardized test preparation, study skills. See their services here:

<http://als.uoregon.edu/index.html>

### **Using Blackboard**

The web site for this course was constructed using "Blackboard" software. This allows the web site to be extensive and interactive. On the web site, you will find general announcements for the class, all documents for the course (including this syllabus), lecture notes, on-line discussions, links to relevant web sites, and more. We hope that this web site will be a useful tool for you in learning the material for this class, and in further exploring topics you find interesting. You can get to the course web site by going to <http://blackboard.uoregon.edu>. If you need help logging in or using Blackboard, see <http://blackboard.uoregon.edu/local/usingbb/>. Also you can get help starting by going to the library [Information Technology Center \(ITC\)](http://libweb.uoregon.edu/kitc/faq/blackboard.html#help) and/or see <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/kitc/faq/blackboard.html#help>.

### **Academic Honesty**

All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. For the consequences of academic dishonesty, refer to the Schedule of Classes published quarterly. Violations will be taken seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records. If you are in doubt regarding any aspect of these issues as they pertain to this course, please consult with the instructor before you complete any relevant requirements of the course.

### **Learning Accommodations**

University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of this course that result in disability related barriers to your participation. If you have a documented disability, please provide the notification letter and meet with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations. Students without a documented disability who are experiencing learning

difficulties are encouraged to consult Disability Services.[Counselor for Students with Disabilities:  
Hillary Gerdes, 346-3211, TTY 346-1083, [hgerdes@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:hgerdes@oregon.uoregon.edu)]