

# **Illness and subjectivity**

(CHDV 43302; ANTH 51305)

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## **LOCATION AND TIME**

Wednesday 1:30-4:20

## **OFFICE HOURS**

Time may vary from week to week. For current office hours and to sign up, please visit: <https://wiki.uchicago.edu/display/~eraikhel/Office+hours>  
Office hours are held in 5736 S. Woodlawn, #203

## **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).

Please note that the final meeting of this course occurs during reading week.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated on the basis of the following requirements and assignments:

- 1) **Participation** in weekly discussions.
- 2) **One in-class presentation** of the readings for a particular week. Working with one or two classmates, students will give one short (10-15 minute) presentation of the readings for a particular week. This should be a presentation of the themes, issues or problems that run through all of the readings, *not* a summary of the texts. Your presentation will serve to open our discussion, so please prepare some discussion questions for the class.
- 3) Two 2,000 to 3,000 word **analyses** of the readings for one or more weeks, in which you analyze a particular problem and establish your own position in relation to the assigned texts. Due by February 1 and March 7.

A number of books will be available for purchase at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore and on reserve at Regenstein:

### Required:

Junko Kitanaka. *Depression in Japan: Psychiatric Cures for a Society in Distress*. (Princeton University Press, 2011).

Gananath Obeyesekere. *The Work of Culture: Symbolic Transformation in Psychoanalysis and Anthropology*. (University of Chicago Press, 1990).

Elizabeth A. Povinelli. *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality*. (Duke University Press, 2006).

All other texts will be available in the "Course Documents" folder on Chalk.

## Schedule of course sessions and readings:

### January 4 – Subjectivity, illness and patienthood

Amelie Rorty. "The Vanishing Subject: The Many Faces of Subjectivity" in eds. *Subjectivity*, ed Joao Biehl, Byron Good, Arthur Kleinman, University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Ortner, S. (2005) 'Subjectivity and Cultural Critique', *Anthropological Theory* 5: 31–52.

Luhrmann, T. M., 'Subjectivity', *Anthropological Theory*, 6 (2006), 345 -361

Todd Meyers. "The patient as a category of thought."

Talcott Parsons. 1951. "The Sick Role" In *The Social System*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

### January 11 – Experience and narrative

Paul Ricoeur, "The Narrative Function." In Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics & the Human Sciences* (ch 11).

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

Mattingly, Cheryl (1994) 'The Concept of Therapeutic Emplotment', *Social Science and Medicine* 38: 811–22.

Cohler, Bertram J., 'The Human Studies and the Life History: The Social Service Review Lecture', *Social Service Review*, 62 (1988), 552-575.

Robert Desjarlais. 1994. Struggling Along: The Possibilities for Experience among the Homeless Mentally Ill. *American Anthropologist* 96: 886-901.

Galen Strawson, "Against narrativity," *Ratio* 17, no. 4 (2004): 428-452.

## January 18 – Metaphor and embodiment

- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. [1947] 2007. from *The Phenomenology of Perception*, In Lock, Margaret M and Judith Farquhar. Eds. *Beyond the body proper: Reading the anthropology of material life*. Duke University Press. pp.133-149.
- Lakoff G, Johnson M (1980) *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL. pp. 1-68.
- Kirmayer, L.J., 1992, *The Body's Insistence on Meaning: Metaphor as Presentation and Representation in Illness Experience*, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 6(4), pp. 323-46.
- Csordas, T J. 1993 *Somatic Modes of Attention*. *Cultural Anthropology* 8 (2): 135-156.
- Low, S. M, 'Embodied Metaphors: Nerves as Lived Experience', *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self*, 1994, 139–162.
- Hinton, D., and S. Hinton, 'Panic Disorder, Somatization, and the New Cross-cultural Psychiatry: The Seven Bodies of a Medical Anthropology of Panic', *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 26 (2002), 155-178.

## January 25 – Emotion, feeling, affect

- Rosaldo, Michelle (1984) "Toward an Anthropology of Self and Feeling." In Richard Shweder and Robert LeVine (eds.), *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 137-157.
- Lutz, Catherine. "Depression and the Translation of Emotional Words." Arthur Kleinman and Byron Good (eds.). *Culture and Depression*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, pp.63-100.
- Richard A. Shweder, 1994. "You're not sick, you're just in love": Emotion as an interpretive system," In Paul Ekman and Richard J. Davidson (Eds), *The Nature of Emotion*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 32-44.
- Janis H. Jenkins, "The state construction of affect: Political ethos and mental health among Salvadoran refugees," *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 15, no. 2 (1991): 139-165.
- Theresa D. O'Neil, 1992. "Feeling Worthless": An Ethnographic Investigation of Depression and Problem Drinking at the Flathead Reservation. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 16:447-470.

Ahmed, Sara., 'Affective Economies', *Social Text*, 22 (2004), 117-139.

## February 1 – The work of culture

\* First paper due \*

Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. New York: Avon Books, 1965, pp. 128-154, 274-310, 311-315.

Obeyesekere, Gananath. *The Work of Culture: Symbolic Transformation in Psychoanalysis and Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990 (Selections).

Ellen Corin. 2007. "The "Other" of Culture in Psychosis," In Biehl, Good & Kleinman (eds), *Subjectivity: Ethnographic Investigations*, University of California Press, pp. 273-314.

## February 8 – Suffering, violence and trauma

Arthur Kleinman, "Experience and Its Moral Modes: Culture, Human Conditions, and Disorder", *Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, 20 (1999), 355-420.

Veena Das (2007) "Language and Body: Transactions in the Construction of Pain" in *Life and World: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Joao Biehl. 2004. "Life of the mind: The interface of psychopharmaceuticals, domestic economies, and social abandonment," *American Ethnologist*, 31, pp. 475-96.

Fassin, Didier, and Estelle d' Halluin, 'Critical Evidence: The Politics of Trauma in French Asylum Policies', *Ethos*, 35 (2007), 300-329.

Allan Young, "Bruno and the Holy Fool: Myth, Mimesis, and the Transmission of Traumatic Memories," in *Understanding Trauma: Integrating Biological, Clinical, and Cultural Perspectives*. Kirmayer, Lemelson and Barad, eds. Cambridge University Press: 2007. pp. 339-362.

## February 15 – Becoming subjects

Michel Foucault. 1982. "The Subject and Power" 1982, in: *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, Rabinow and Dreyfus. University of Chicago Press.

Michel Foucault. (1997) "Technologies of the Self." Pp. 221-251 in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *Michel Foucault: Ethics, Subjectivity, and Truth*. New York: The New York Press.

Judith Farquhar and Qicheng Zhang, "Biopolitical Beijing: Pleasure, Sovereignty, and Self-Cultivation in China's Capital," *Cultural Anthropology* 20, no. 3 (August 1, 2005): 303-327.

Vinh-kim Nguyen. 2005 Antiretroviral Globalism, Biopolitics, and Therapeutic Citizenship. In *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*. A. Ong and S. J. Collier, eds. Pp. 124–144. Malden, MA: Blackwell

Petryna, Adriana. 2010. "Biological citizenship" In: *A Reader in Medical Anthropology: Theoretical Trajectories, Emergent Realities*.

## February 22 – Intimacy and care

Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality*. (Duke University Press, 2006).

## February 29 – Making up minds

Ian Hacking. 1995. 'The Looping Effects of Human Kinds', *Causal Cognition: A Multidisciplinary Debate*, 351-394.

Junko Kitanaka. *Depression in Japan: Psychiatric Cures for a Society in Distress*. (Princeton University Press, 2011).

## March 7 – Disordered states

\* Second paper due \*

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

<http://somasphere.net/2010/09/subjectivity-politics-and-medical.html>

- Good, B., Subandi & Delvecchio Good, M.J. 2007, The Subject of Mental Illness: Psychosis, Mad Violence, and Subjectivity in Indonesia, in Biehl, Good & Kleinman (eds), *Subjectivity: Ethnographic Investigations*, University of California Press, pp. 243-272.
- Begoña Aretxaga, 2008. "Madness and the Politically Real: Reflections on Violence in Post-dictatorial Spain." *Postcolonial Disorders* University of California Press: 43-61.
- Anne M. Lovell (2007), Hoarders and Scrappers: Madness and the Social Person in the Interstices of the City, in Joao Biehl, Byron Good and Arthur Kleinman, *Subjectivity : Ethnographic Investigations*, Berkeley, University of California Press, p. 315-340.
- Lisa Stevenson. 2009. "The Suicidal Wound and Fieldwork among Canadian Inuit." In *Being There: The Fieldwork Encounter and the Making of Truth*. Edited by John Borneman and Abdellah Hammoudi. U California Press.