Illness and subjectivity
(CHDV 43302; ANTH 51305)
Spring 2013

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LOCATION AND TIME
Wednesdays, 1:30 – 4:20 PM; Wiebolt Hall 230

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) A series of short (500 word) **reading responses**. Beginning week 2 of the course, students will write a response to the readings for each week and post it to the “Discussion Board” section of the Chalk website. The reading response can either take the form of comments or questions that arise from the readings for that week, or a comment on a reading response posted by another student. If you choose to comment on another student’s response you should make clear reference to and engage with the text(s) being discussed as well. Students who would prefer not to share their responses with their classmates, can email them directly to me. It is important that responses be posted (or emailed) by 9 AM each Wednesday.
3) A final 3,000 to 4,000 word **paper**, for which you may either a) make a conceptual argument drawing on readings from more than one week, or b) use concepts from course readings to interpret findings from your own empirical research. Due by June 12 (or June 5 for students graduating in Spring 2013).

One book will be available for purchase at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore. It is also available as an e-book through the Library’s website:

**Required:**


All other texts will be available in the “Course Documents” folder on Chalk.
Schedule of course sessions and readings:

April 3 – Person, self, subjectivity


April 10 – Experience and narrative


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


April 17 – Metaphor and embodiment


April 24 – Suffering


Joel Robbins. “Beyond the Suffering Subject: Toward an Anthropology of the Good.” Forthcoming in *JRAI*.
May 1 – The self, its disturbances and the work of culture


May 8 – Emotion


May 15 – Affect


Berlant, Lauren, ‘Slow Death (Sovereignty, Obesity, Lateral Agency)’, Critical Inquiry, 33 (2007), 754–780


Papoulias, Constantina, and Felicity Callard, 'Biology’s Gift: Interrogating the Turn to Affect', Body & Society, 16 (2010), 29–56


[Optional: read around in the critical discussion responding to Leys’ article]:
• Frank, Adam, and Elizabeth A. Wilson, ‘Like-Minded’, Critical Inquiry, 38 (2012), 870–877
May 22 – The self as subject


May 29 – Neuro I: the somatic self


June 5 – Neuro 2: engagements, experiments and entanglements


Roepstorff, Andreas, and Chris Frith, ‘Neuroanthropology or Simply Anthropology? Going Experimental as Method, as Object of Study, and as Research Aesthetic’, *Anthropological Theory*, 12 (2012), 101–111

