SC314: Mental Illness and Society
Fall 2012
Lara Birk (birk@bc.edu)
Tues/Thurs 12-1:15, Carney 003
Office Hours: Thurs 1:30-3:30 in Chocolate Bar or by appointment

Course Description

Psychiatric disorders are commonly viewed through a purely biomedical and/or a psychological framework. In this course, we will apply a sociological imagination to the topic and interrogate the ways in which mental illness, often seen as a supremely private “personal trouble,” is also a “public issue.” We will read the works of both classic and contemporary scholars, but we will also use memoirs and films to sensitize us to the experience of mental illness itself. We will explore mental illness as a social construction, stigma, labeling theory, as well as issues of gender, race, class, and sexuality in mental illness.

Course Objectives

- To understand mental illness through a sociological imagination
- To listen to the voices of the mentally ill themselves and learn about the mental illness experience
- To improve the skills in critical thinking, reading, public speaking, and analytical writing that will help you to excel in and beyond college

Required Texts
1. Sigmund Freud (1905), Dora
2. Marya Hornbacher (2008), Madness: A Bipolar Life
3. David A. Karp (1996), Speaking of Sadness
4. David A. Karp & Gretchen E. Sisson (2010), Voices from the Inside
5. Lauren Slater (1998), Prozac Diary
6. Additional Readings in Course Reserves

Films
1. A Beautiful Mind (2001)
2. Gaslight (1944)
3. One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (1975)
**Grading**

- 10% Attendance & Participation
- 10% Co-Leadership of 1 Class Discussion
- 15% First Paper (4-5 pages) due October 2
- 15% Second Paper (4-5 pages) due the next class session after you lead discussion
- 10% Annotated Bibliography for Term Paper (10 sources) due November 15
- 15% Presentation of Final Paper between November 29 – December 6
- 25% Final Paper (10-12 pages) due December 11

**Late Work**

I will allow extensions, but only under extreme circumstances (significant illness, family emergency, etc.). If you anticipate that you will need extra time to complete an assignment, please see me right away (do not email me with such requests). Work that is more than 5 days from the original due date will receive an F. If you have not been granted an official extension, you will receive a grade deduction of 10% for every day your work is late.

**Class Attendance**

Regular attendance is necessary to do well in this course. I expect you to attend and participate fully in every class session. If you anticipate missing a class for any reason, you must email me in advance to notify me of the reason for your absence. If there is an illness or family matter to which you need to attend, you must have the dean send me a notice about it if you expect to miss more than one class session. Excessive absences will be noted and will significantly affect your grade in the course.

**Please note:** When students use electronics (laptops, Ipads, smart phones, etc.) in the classroom, I find that it tends to be a distraction to you and your classmates more often than it is an enhancement to your learning. This is a discussion-heavy course, and your full attention and participation are required at all times. As such, I ask that you please refrain from using such devices during class.

**Participation**

As mentioned above, this is a course centered on class discussion, and therefore I expect you to:

1) Do the assigned readings before the class in which they are due
2) Participate in class discussions on a regular basis

If you anticipate this will be a problem for you due to shyness or any other reason, please see me immediately. There are many ways to contribute to the intellectual discourse of the class in addition to regular participation in class discussions (e.g., written reflections on the readings and/or class discussions, Blackboard, prepared presentations, etc.).

**Students with Disabilities**

If you have a disability of any kind that you believe will impact your ability to perform academically, you must be registered with the Disability Services Office in Maloney Hall at 21 Campanella Way. Please notify me at the beginning of the semester if you have a documented disability and what sort of accommodations you will need in this course.
Campus Resources

- Connors Family Learning Center: O’Neill Library, 617-552-0611
- Learning Resources for Student-Athletes: Yawkey Athletic Center, 617-552-8533
- Health Services: 119 Cushing Hall, 617-552-3225 or Emergency (24 hours) 617-552-3227
- Counseling Services: 108 Gasson Hall, 617-552-3310
- Disability Services Office: Maloney Hall, Suite 212, 617-552-3470
- Women’s Resource Center: 213 McElroy, 617-552-3489
- Sexual Assault Network: 617-552-BC11
- BC Police Department: Emergency 617-552-4444, Non-Emergency 617-552-3475

Academic Integrity

In this and all Boston College courses, you are expected to present only your own work and ideas as your own. If you borrow the words or ideas of anyone else, whether an online source, a noted scholar in the field, or a classmate, you must accurately cite (and where necessary quote) that individual’s contributions. Engaging in cheating or plagiarism of any sort is a serious breach of the honor code implicit in the everyday operations of university life and a major violation of Boston College’s academic integrity policies. If I find you have been intellectually dishonest, you will be reported to the dean and penalized accordingly. For a full statement of BC’s policies on academic integrity, please see http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html.

Assignments

Prequel to the Course

Tuesday, September 4 – Introduction

Thursday, September 6 – Psychiatry: Of Two Minds
- T.M. Luhrmann (2000), “Where the Split Came From” (Ch. 5 in Of Two Minds, p. 203-238)
- Elyn R. Saks (2010), “The Center Cannot Hold” (Ch. 4 in Voices from the Inside, p. 43-54)

Tuesday, September 11 – Psychological & Biomedical Approaches to Mental Illness
- Christopher Peterson (2010), “Psychological Approaches to Mental Illness” (Ch. 5 in Handbook of the Study of Mental Health, p. 89-105)
- Schwartz and Corcoran (2010), “Biological Theories of Psychiatric Disorders: A Sociological Approach” (Ch. 4 in Handbook of Study of Mental Health, p. 64-88)

Understanding Mental Illness through a Sociological Imagination

Thursday, September 13 – Viewing Mental Illness through a Sociological Imagination
- C. Wright Mills (1959), “The Promise” (p. 1-6)
- Emile Durkheim (1897/1979), “The Social Element of Suicide (Book 3 Ch. 1 in Suicide, p. 297-325)
- Carla Fine (2010), “No Time to Say Goodbye” (Ch. 13 in Voices, p. 153-164)
Tuesday, September 18 – Overview of Sociological Approaches to Mental Illness
  ❖ Peggy Thoits (2010), “Sociological Approaches to Mental Illness” (Ch. 6 in Handbook for the Study of Mental Health, p. 106-124)

Thursday, September 20 – Deconstructing the Diagnosis
  ❖ Rick Mayes and Allan Horwitz (2005), “DSM-III and the Revolution in the Classification of Mental Illness” (p. 249-267)
  ❖ Peter Conrad (2005), “The Shifting Engines of Medicalization” (p. 3-14)
  ❖ Arthur Kleinman (1988), “What is a Psychiatric Diagnosis” (Ch. 1 in Rethinking Psychiatry, p. 5-17)
  ❖ Kay Redfield Jamison (2010), “Flights of Mind” (Ch. 2 in Voices, p. 24-32)

Tuesday, September 25 – “Antipsychiatry”: Critiques of Psychiatric Diagnosis
  ❖ Thomas Szasz (1960), “The Myth of Mental Illness” (p. 113-117)
  ❖ Thomas Scheff (1966/1999), “The Social Institution of Insanity” (Ch. 5 in Being Mentally Ill, p. 69-97)
  ❖ Mark Vonnegut (2010), “The Eden Express” (Ch. 3 in Voices, p. 33-42)

Thursday, September 27 – The Stigma of Mental Illness
  ❖ Erving Goffman (1963), “Stigma and Social Identity” (Ch. 1 excerpt in Stigma, p. 1-14)
  ❖ Bruce Link and Jo Phelan (2001), “Conceptualizing Stigma” (p. 363-385)
  ❖ Carol Owen; Sharon O’Brien (2010), “Part VI: The Stigma of Mental Illness” (Voices, p. 165-192)

Tuesday, October 2 – Institutionalization
  ❖ WATCH FILM BEFORE CLASS: One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (1975)
  ❖ Kate Millett; Lori Schiller (2010), “Part III: Hospitalization” (Voices p. 95-120)
  ❖ DEADLINE: FIRST PAPER (4-5 pages)

**Hysteria: A Gendered Case Study**

Thursday, October 4 – Freud’s Case Study of Hysteria
  ❖ Sigmund Freud (1905), Dora, p. 1-112 (SKIM)

Tuesday, October 9 – Deconstructing Hysteria
  ❖ Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1892), “The Yellow Wallpaper”
  ❖ Elaine Showalter (1997), “The Hysterical Hot Zone” (p. 3-13) and “Defining Hysteria” (p. 14-29) (Ch. 1 and 2 in Hystories)

Thursday, October 11 – The Making of a Mad Woman
  ❖ WATCH FILM BEFORE CLASS: Gaslight (1944)
  ❖ D. C. Jack (1991), “Loss of Voice” (Ch. 2 excerpt in Silencing the Self, p. 29-37)
**Class, Race, and Sexuality in Mental Illness**

Tuesday, October 16 – Social Class and Mental Illness  
- Sarah Rosenfield (2012), "Triple Jeopardy: Mental Health at the Intersection of Gender, Race, and Class" (p. 1791-1801)  
- William Eaton, Carles Muntaner, and Jaime Sapag (2010), "Socioeconomic Stratification and Mental Disorder" (Ch. 12 in *Handbook for the Study of Mental Health*, p. 226-255)

Thursday, October 18 – Race, Racism, and Mental Illness  
- Janis Sanchez-Hudich (1998), "Racism: Emotional Abusiveness and Psychological Trauma for Ethnic Minorities" (p. 69-87)  
- Thema Bryant-Davis and Carlota Ocampo (2005), "The Trauma of Racism" (p. 574-578)

Tuesday, October 23 – Sexuality, Homophobia, and Mental Illness  
- Richard Friedman and Jennifer Downey (1998), "Psychoanalysis and the Model of Homosexuality as Psychopathology: A Historical Overview" (p. 249-270)  
- Gregory Herek (2004), "Beyond 'Homophobia': Thinking About Sexual Prejudice and Stigma in the 21st Century" (p. 6-24)

**Qualitative Research on the Experience of Mental Illness**

Thursday, October 25 – Symbolic Interactionist Approach to Mental Illness  
- David Karp (1996), *Speaking of Sadness*, Ch. 1, 2, and 3 (p. 1-77)  
- **DEADLINE: FINAL PAPER TOPIC**

Tuesday, October 30 – Symbolic Interactionist Approach to Mental Illness, cont’d  
- David Karp (1996), *Speaking of Sadness*, Ch. 7 (p. 165-188)  
- Sue Estroff (1991), "Everybody's Got a Little Mental Illness" (p. 331-369)

Thursday, November 1 – The Researcher and the Researched  
- Sue Estroff (1995), "Whose Story is it Anyway?" (p. 77-104)  
- Arthur Frank (1997), "When Bodies Need Voices" (Ch. 1 in *Wounded Storyteller*, p. 1-26)

**The Mental Illness Experience: Voices of the Mentally Ill**

Tuesday, November 6 – On Bipolar Disorder  
- MEMOIR: Marya Hornbacher (2008), *Madness: A Bipolar Life*

Thursday, November 8 – On Depression  
- David A. Karp (2010), "An Unwelcome Career" (Ch. 1 in *Voices*, p. 16-23)  
- Martha Manning (2002), "The Legacy" (in *Unholy Ghost*, p. 256-269)  
- Lauren Slater (2002), "Noontime," (in *Unholy Ghost*, p. 75-104)
Tuesday, November 13 – On Schizophrenia
    ❖ WATCH FILM BEFORE CLASS: A Beautiful Mind (2001)

Thursday, November 15 – On Taking Medication
    ❖ David A. Karp, “Doxepin Diary” (p. 1-8) and “Searching for Authenticity” (p. 95-126) (Prologue and Ch. 4 in Is It Me or My Meds)
    ❖ Lauren Slater; David A. Karp (2010), “Part IV: The Meanings of Medication” (Voices, p. 121-148)
    ❖ DEADLINE: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY for FINAL PAPER (10 sources)

Tuesday, November 20 – On Recovery
    ❖ MEMOIR: Lauren Slater (1998), Prozac Diary

Thursday, November 22 – No Class (Thanksgiving Holidays)

Tuesday, November 27 – Listening to Caregivers
    ❖ David A. Karp (2001), “Bearing Responsibility” (Ch. 2 in Burden of Sympathy, p. 35-70)
    ❖ Clea Simon (2010), “Everything Falls Apart” (Ch. 7 in Voices, p. 77-84)
    ❖ RECOMMENDED: COMPLETE YOUR FIRST DRAFT of the TERM PAPER by TODAY

Thursday, November 29 – Student Presentations of Final Papers
    ❖ No Readings

Tuesday, December 4 – Student Presentations of Final Papers
    ❖ No Readings

Thursday, December 6 – Student Presentations of Final Papers
    ❖ No Readings

Tuesday, December 11 – DEADLINE for FINAL PAPER (10-12 pages)