U201XX CULTURE, MIND, AND ETHICS

INTRODUCTION

Anthropologist Ruth Benedict famously stated, “The purpose of anthropology is to make the world safe for human difference.” Benedict’s vision of anthropology rested on a synthesis of psychological and social theory, offering a way to overcome the reductive traps of social constructionism on the one hand, and individual choice on the other. Instead, she saw culture and the mind in a dynamic conversation with each other, co-constitutive and adaptable.

This module takes as its premise, the idea that understanding the ways mind and culture interact is essential for the enhancement of human life. How can understanding the relationship between mind and culture help us to be more tolerant, to recognize and appreciate the diversity of human experience, and importantly, to imagine ways to enhance life in ways that are ethical?

Peaceful coexistence, cooperation and mutual care, which is at the heart of social harmony and flourishing rests upon the ability to maintain a set of shared values and norms (though customs, rituals and traditions), and a means of including individuals whose minds are different, healing those whose minds are disturbed, and creating a nonviolent means of insuring security and equality. As long as social groups maintain that cultural and cognitive differences produce irreconcilable and dangerous threats beyond the ability to change, we will continue to pursue the legacy of a “clash of civilizations” and minds.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understand, distinguish and evaluate the contributions of different theories of psychological anthropology
- Apply theories of culture and mind to analyse and critically examine topics of public interest
- Generate research outputs about culture and the mind with potential for translational application
- Understand the value of cultural understanding for improving global mental health and treatment

MODULE LEADER

Module Leader:
Jason Danely

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Office hours posted online

Other Contributors TBD

ORGANISATION OF THE MODULE

There is a weekly slot of three hours. Each week will address a different theme. There are 12 sessions of the module.

Discussion

This module will review some of the major theories and concepts of psychological anthropology and cultural psychology, making ample use of ethnographic and cross-cultural case studies when possible. The purpose of our discussions is not to give a definitive set of facts or answers, but to outline the scope of the topic, pose relevant questions for consideration, and touch upon areas of controversy. Each week there will be 2-3 student seminar leaders who will be responsible for highlighting the main points of the assigned key readings and encouraging interest in the subject. That said, your enjoyment of the discussions will largely depend on your own initiative. It is important to attend regularly and engage in our discussions and debates, keep up with the readings, and prepare
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Based on your own questions and critiques. Depending on the topic, we may split up into smaller groups to facilitate discussion or debate.

ASSESSMENT

The grade will be based 60% on group projects and 40% on a (seen) mid-term and final exam. Since group projects take up a significant amount of our time together, attendance and participation are essential and will be factored into individual marks.

Students will be expected to work in small groups of 4-5 for their coursework. Each student group will take up one of the six preselected class topics. These topics may be changed or updated. For each topic, the groups will conduct research and create three outputs: 1. a group authored annotated bibliography, 2. a translational or practical application or outreach plan based on the research, and 3. a policy brief or white paper demonstrating an thorough knowledge of the topic and the ability to suggest ways to enhance life based on theories and ethnographic evidence related to culture, mind and ethics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic (example)/Project</th>
<th>Annotated Bib (Weeks 2-4)</th>
<th>Translation Plan (Weeks 5-7)</th>
<th>Policy Brief (Weeks 9-11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neurodiversity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moral responsibility</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mindfulness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race and mental illness</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture-bound syndromes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith and healing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each student will submit one of each type of assessment and cover three of the six topics. This will provide students with a broad understanding of applications, but it will not be sufficient for in-depth study of any single topic.

Each group will work on a topic for three weeks. The first week will consist of research and organization, the second week, writing, the third week teaching. In the third week (weeks 4, 7, 11) the group members will pass on what they learned in their project to the incoming group. So on the topic of Neurodiversity, group 1 teaches 4 what they learned from the annotated bibliography, and 4 teaches 2 what they learned from the translational plan and bib in week 7. Materials, notes and ideas are passed along from one group to another. There will be no teaching session for the Policy Brief project (week 11), but there will be a debriefing session for the whole project. Projects will therefore build on each other, but not be restricted to a single group. At the transition to a new topic, group composition may be refigured either by the instructor or in accommodation of student requests.

Detailed instructions for each project and topic will be posted on the Moodle website separately.

Each project output will be worth 15% of the final grade. The remaining 5% for each project (total 15% of final mark) will be based on attendance and participation (based on self-evaluations collected at the end of the module)

TESTS

In addition to the topic-based projects, there will be two essay tests, each worth 20% of the final mark. These tests will focus on the key readings for the class and our seminar discussions.
The Midterm test will be a seen test, and students are encouraged to consult their notes and the texts to include direct references to arguments and evidence. The content will cover the material from weeks 1-6. Student work should be original and answers that appear to show evidence of collaboration will be subject to review by the academic integrity officer. Questions will be posted in week 8, and there will be no regular class session held during that week. Instead instructor will be available via the chat function on moodle in case there are questions or problems regarding the test.

Tests must be uploaded to Turnitin/Grademark before our class session in week 9 to ensure that student work is original. Students will receive feedback through this system either as written or recorded voice feedback. Students are expected to notify the module leader to make alternative arrangements should these be necessary.

The final test will be taken in-class during week 12 and will cover material from weeks 7-11. This will also be an essay test, but no notes or texts will be allowed.

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Applications for mitigating circumstances must be made on line – full details of what qualifies as mitigating circumstances and how to submit an application are available via the Brookes website.

READINGS

There are no textbooks for this course (there are simply no texts that cover the breadth of topics that we will cover in this course), but students are expected to read the key texts which have been scanned and uploaded to Moodle or are available via the library Aspire reading list.

You are not expected to read everything on the reading list, but you should read something from the key readings every week. For each week, the reading is divided into key readings (readings that directly complement the lecture), discussion readings (short articles, podcasts, blogs, etc. that serve as jumping off points for discussion) and further readings (for those who are interested in a particular aspect of the topic not covered in the key readings). Another purpose of including a wide range of further readings is avoid a rush on limited library resources, and also to give you an idea of what is available and to allow you to pursue your own interests.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>1-2:30</th>
<th>2:30-2:45</th>
<th>2:45-4</th>
<th>KEY READING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Course introduction</td>
<td>Group think</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>Shweder LeVine Lindholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Psychoanalytic anthropology Dreams, defenses, desires</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>Group work research</td>
<td>Freud Spiro Hollan Groark Devereaux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Culture and Personality child socialization, adult personality, schismogenesis, deviation in culture, trauma and change</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>Group work writing</td>
<td>Bateson DeVos Erikson Mead DuBois</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cognition and Language Schema, analogic cognition, distributed cognition</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>Group work teaching</td>
<td>Shore D’Andrade Holland Quinn/Strauss Hutchins Lakoff and Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Emotion and Affect</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>Group work (2)- research</td>
<td>Lutz Levy Luhrman Rosaldo Stewart</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mid-term test</td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Religion and Symbol</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>Group work (2) writing</td>
<td>Luhman Obeyesekre Lester</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Altered States of Consciousness</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>Group work (2) teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Psychiatric Anthropology</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>Group work research</td>
<td>Metzl Luhrman Scheper-Hughes Rokeach Biehl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Pharmaceutical Anthropology</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>Group work writing</td>
<td>Jenkins Martin Petryna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Review Policy Reports</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>General review for final test</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Test</td>
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**Week-by-Week Guide to Sessions**

**Week 1: Introduction to the Module: Issues, Experiences and Expectations**

**Objectives**

- Introduce the module and address questions about how it will be organised and assessed
- Discuss what we as a class hope to learn regarding care during our 12 weeks together

**Key Readings**


**For Discussion**

Epstein, Robert. 2016. The Empty Brain. Aeon.co

Does the brain work like a computer? Where does the brain end and the mind begin? Is the mind contained in the individual, or something shared or between individuals? Where do we locate ethics and morals? If mind, culture, and brain are interdependent, does enhancing one also enhance the others?

**Further Readings**


**Part I (weeks 2-4): The Foundations**

In these weeks we will work on mastering some foundational concepts and vocabulary of psychological anthropology and cultural psychology. These concepts continue to be debated, expanded, critiqued and used in anthropological analysis, and they will help you to find appropriate theoretical frameworks for your projects.

**Week 2: Psychoanalysis and Anthropology**

**Objectives**

- Outline the significance of psychoanalysis for revolutionizing the way the mind was understood as an object of study and treatment
- Identify techniques and domains of study for psychoanalytic anthropologists in the past and today
- Evaluate the relevance of psychoanalytic thought for current psychological anthropology
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**KEY READING**


**FOR DISCUSSION**

tbd

**FURTHER SUGGESTED READING**


**WEEK 3: CULTURE, PERSONALITY, AND CHILD SOCIALIZATION**

**OBJECTIVES**

- Understand and evaluate the value of bringing culture and personality into close relationship to one another
- Participate in a debate about the implications for deviance, agency and creativity
- Compare child care in other cultures and consider its implications of later personality and cultural impact
KEY READING:


FOR DISCUSSION

TBD

WATCH

Bathing Babies in Three Cultures – Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson

FURTHER SUGGESTED READING:


Spiro, Melford. 1965. Children of the Kibbutz: A study in child training and personality

WEEK 4: COGNITION AND LANGUAGE

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the scientific context of the emergence of cognitive anthropology
- Use the analogic and metaphoric processes to make meaning of cultural phenomena
- Relate cognitive theories to our human capacities for cooperation, communication and the enhancement of life

KEY READING


**FURTHER READING**


**PART II: SELF, FEELING AND CONSCIOUSNESS (WEEKS 5-6)**

While cognitive anthropology retained a niche in mainstream anthropology, in part due to its strong link to French Structuralism and linguistic anthropology, psychodynamic anthropology, influenced by the 60s and 70s countercultures and the rise of postmodern/post-colonial/feminist and queer theory, began to reach beyond to focus on theories about the use of symbols, emotions, and alternate states of consciousness. While mainstream cultural anthropologists tended to look at these in a more radical relativist/constructionist perspective, psychological anthropologists retained an emphasis on universal human experiences and cross-cultural comparison of mental and bodily states. In this section we will examine themes of self, feeling, consciousness and the body and the ways culture provides symbolic means for interacting with these in meaningful ways.

**WEEK 5: EMOTION, AFFECT AND THE BODY**
OBJECTIVES

- Review the basic emotions and debate their universality or variation
- Assess the role of emotion for moral human social interaction; highlight both its ability to enhance life and to damage it
- Understand cultural variation in emotion and reflect on the role of emotion in our own daily lives.

KEY READINGS


DISCUSSION

Suttie, Jill. 2014. Is a Happy Life Different from a Meaningful One?

FURTHER READING


Week 6 Religion, Symbol, and Mind

Objectives

- Determine how social scientists can study religion in the mind
- Understand the role of symbols and rituals for manipulating and managing psychic states
- Describe the psychology of charismatic Christianity and its relationship to subjectivity

Key Reading


More for Discussion

If you like the key reading (and I am sure you will) be sure to read some of the Book Symposium on When God Talks Back, published in HAU http://www.haujournal.org/index.php/hau/issue/view/hau3.3 This will set us up for some good discussions in class. Of special interest for us are the short commentaries by Stoller, and Mayblin

Further Reading


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**WEEK SEVEN: (ALTERED) STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

**OBJECTIVES**

- Examine the role of altered states of consciousness for enhancing life across cultures
- Use neuroanthropology to understand the cultural and physiological relationship in trances and other altered states
- Identify ways in which contemporary health and spiritual practices incorporate or reject altered states of consciousness and its implications for indigenous or other minority groups

**KEY READING**

Boddy, Janice. Spirits and Selves in Norther Sudan: The Cultural Therapeutics of Possession and Trance. In A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion (398-418)


**FOR DISCUSSION**


Edie Turner is perhaps the most courageous proponent of the idea that spirit is part of our human reality, existing independent of our mental and physical capacities but animating them nonetheless. A lifetime dedicated to the study of ritual and symbol has brought her and others to this conclusion. What are the implications for acknowledging the reality of spiritual experience? How might this change how we think about ‘enhancing life’?

Trance and Dance in Bali (video), Jero on Jero (documentary)

**FURTHER READING**


PART III ENHANCING MENTAL HEALTH (WEEKS 9-10)

In this section we approach mental health and illness as socially constructed categories used to diagnose and treat symptoms and to promote wellness for individuals and societies. That said, psychiatric institutions and technologies are too often dominated by aims and interests that clash with or ignore the lived experience and needs of those suffering from mental illness. In some cases this has brought about social exclusion (Biehl), injustice (Metzl), stigma, and increased vulnerability. How can psychological anthropology shed light on the gap between mental health care and the experience of

WEEK 9: PSYCHIATRIC ANTHROPOLOGY

OBJECTIVES

- Discuss the some aspects of the cultural and philosophical development of modern psychiatric understanding of mental illness and its treatment
- Debate/discuss the ways cultural anthropology might shed light on overlooked aspects of personhood or social context that become lost in biomedical discourse

KEY READING


FOR DISCUSSION


RECOMMENDED READING


WEEK 10: ANTHROPOLOGY OF PHARMACEUTICALS

OBJECTIVES

- Critically evaluate the social structures and power dynamics of pharmaceutical economies
- Debate and discuss the ways drugs enhance life or hinder its enhancement

KEY READING


RECOMMENDED READINGS


WEEK 11: REVIEW

- Review policy briefs and other group work with concentration on ethics
- Completing self-evaluations
- Completing module evaluations

WEEK 12: FINAL TEST

Good luck!