On Madness
Course director: Sharon Sliwinski

Madness, many people claim, is a problem of reason. Our course explores this idea from several vantages: psychiatry and psychoanalysis (and the critical responses to these discourses), postcolonial and feminist interventions, as well as the work of novelists, visual artists, and other individuals who have themselves been labelled mad. Our guiding approach will be object relations theory, which conceptualizes the mind as an assembly of different parts of the self and where the dynamics of the internal world apply both to the individual and to the group. This approach allows us to make crucial connections between the functioning of the internal world and the political sphere. Studying these states of mind has perhaps become more significant that ever: paranoia poses a grave threat to preserving an open mind, which is essential to the wellbeing of individuals, groups, nations, and the planet.

Possible Readings
Christopher Bollas, *When the Sun Bursts: The Enigma of Schizophrenia*
Daniel Paul Schreber, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*
Freud, *The Schreber Case*
Jacques Lacan, “The Case of Aimée, or Self-punitive Paranoia”
Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*
Derrida, “Cogito and the History of Madness” + “To do Justice to Freud: The History of madness in the age of psychoanalysis”
Frantz Fanon, “Colonial War and Mental Disorders” in *Wretched of the Earth*
Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady* [excerpt on Ophelia]
Darian Leader, *What Is Madness?*
Barbara Taylor, *The Last Asylum*
Sarah Waters, *Fingersmith*
Michal Heiman, “Attacks on Return – A Proposal for a New Community of Women”
Félix Guattari, *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics*
Andre Greene, *On Private Madness*
**Assignments**
Keyword presentation: 750 words (20%)
Reading responses: 500 words x 4 (30%)
Paper proposal in the form of an Op-ed: 650 words (15%)
Term paper: 4500 words (35%)