Western University
School of Health Studies

HS3262G: Mental Illness and Healing Across Cultures

(may be available with instructor permission to students in the Masters of Global Health Systems as course GHS 9023A)

January 11-April 2021

Timing: Tuesdays, 6:30pm to 8:30pm
Location: Online, synchronous
Professor: Elysée Nouvet, PhD
Email: enouvet@uwo.ca
Office: Zoom
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10-12, by appointment (book via OWL office hours tab)

Prerequisite(s): Registration in the third or fourth year of the School of Health Studies or the Honors Specialization or Specialization in Global Health Studies at Huron University College.
Antirequisite(s): Health Sciences 3093F/G, if taken in Fall of 2017

Prerequisite Checking

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

This course provides students with an introduction to the critical study of global mental health and illness. Through weekly case studies, we will explore how experiences, ideas, and treatment of mental health and illness in particular historical and social contexts connect to the values, norms, and power relations at play in understandings and responses to mental distress within those contexts. We will examine how factors such as workloads, access to resources, environment, and social identity can impact social actors’ mental health and provide opportunities or limit resources available for healing.
Readings for this course are taken from a broad range of disciplines (psychiatry, sociology, anthropology, history of science, feminist studies, cultural studies). Our goal is to immerse ourselves into culturally diverse experiences and understandings of mental illness, and the way this shapes options imagined for healing and social inclusion.

**Learning objectives**

*Through this course, students will have the opportunity to:*

- Deepen their understanding of socio-cultural and historical dimensions of mental illness and healing
- Develop critical health analysis skills through writing and in-class activities
- Integrate their research interests within nuanced understandings of how culture informs our understandings of and responses to mental illness and healing
- Articulate key concepts and limitations of universalist approaches in relation to the field of global mental health
- Imagine and rationalize strategies for reducing the stigma and burdens associated with mental health in specific contexts

**Required readings (course material student must obtain):**

1. There are weekly readings in this course as well as assigned media materials (podcasts + video). Course materials are available free of charge to Western students and these will be posted on OWL as hyperlinks in the modules or, if from a library book, in “course readings” section. Please check this site often for updated required class readings, and to keep informed of important course information or announcements.

If you require this information in an alternate/accessible format, please contact me.

**COURSE SUMMARY**

*Note: the order of topics may change – a finalized version of the course plan will be available January 1st 2021.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>In-class dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction: Culture and mental health</td>
<td>Jan. 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mad and bad: politics and practices of early psychopathology</td>
<td>Jan. 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sacred sickness</td>
<td>Jan. 26</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Gendered determinants, expression, and recognition of distress</td>
<td>Feb. 2</td>
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<td>No.</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Social suffering &amp; collective healing</td>
<td>Feb. 9</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>No class – reading week</td>
<td>Feb. 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Western-based research highlight session</td>
<td>Feb. 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Critical perspectives on mental health ‘epidemics’ in high-income countries</td>
<td>Mar. 2</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Serious mental illness (SMI) in HICs: rethinking the possible</td>
<td>Mar. 9</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Addressing psychosocial impacts of war &amp; displacement</td>
<td>Mar. 16</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Pharma’s role and limits in low resource settings</td>
<td>Mar. 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Global mental health: progress, challenges, and the way forward</td>
<td>Mar. 30</td>
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**Evaluations (for undergrads):**

- Weekly participation 10%
- Mid-term (take-home)
  - Available Feb. 9, due Feb. 23 25%
  - Take-home final exam 35%
- 2 Synthesis *** Papers
  - (2-3 pages each, double spaced)
  - 1 due before Feb break): 30% (2 X 15%)

**Evaluations (for grad students):**

- In class or online activities & participation 10%
- Kahoot & recap for 1 week 5%
- Synthesis (due before Feb break) 15%
  - (3 pages, double spaced)
- Knowledge dissemination strategy
  - Strategic plan presentation 10%
  - Final strategy report 35%
Take-home final exam 35%

*** Synthesis Papers are based on the assigned readings for one topic/week, and must be handed in before the start of the week’s first lecture. No late syntheses will be accepted.

WEEK 1: Jan. 12
Introduction: Thinking with culture


OPTIONAL

WEEK 2: Jan. 19
Mad and bad: politics and practices of early psychopathology


OPTIONAL


WEEK 3: Jan. 26
Sacred sickness

OPTIONAL


Week 4: February 2
Gendered determinants, expression, and recognition of distress


OPTIONAL


WEEK 5: February 9
Social suffering & collective healing
(take-home exam handed out – due Feb 23 before class)


Optional


WEEK 6: Feb 16 No class - reading week

WEEK 7: Feb 23 – Western-based culture & mental health research highlight session (no readings – mid-terms due before class)
Invited speakers:
1) Lily Yosieph, Masters candidate, Western University – Africo-Canadian youth experiences of mental illness and well-being
2) Gerald McKinley, faculty member, Western University

WEEK 8: Mar 2
Critical perspectives on mental health ‘epidemics’ in high-income countries


OPTIONAL

WEEK 9: Mar 9
Addressing psychosocial impacts of displacement and war

*Guest speaker in hour 2: Zoha Salam, PhD candidate McMaster University – Syrian adolescent refugees’ mental health*

**WEEK 10: Mar 16**

**Serious mental illness (SMI) in HICs: rethinking the possible**


**WEEK 11: Mar 23**

**Pharma’s role and limits in low resource settings**


2) Read, Ursula. “I want the one that will heal me completely so it won’t come back again”: The limits of antipsychotic medication in rural Ghana *Transcultural Psychiatry* 49(3-4): 438-460.

**WEEK 12: Mar 30** (take home exam handed out)

**Global mental health: progress, challenges, and the way forward**

1) BBC PODCAST Zanzibar: Spirits & Psychiatry [https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3cstwj4](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3cstwj4)


**OPTIONAL**


WEEK 13: APRIL 6
- Grad student presentation
- Take-home exam due

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Grading policy
The university-wide descriptor of the meaning of letter grades, as approved by Senate:
A+ 90-100 One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level.
A 80-89 Superior work that is clearly above average
B 70-79 Good work, meeting all requirements and eminently satisfactory
C 60-69 Competent work, meeting requirements
D 50-59 Fair work, minimally acceptable
F below 50 Fail

It is expected that the grades for this course will fall between 74% and 78%. In the event that the course average falls outside this range, a constant may be added or subtracted from each student’s grade, by the instructor, to bring the class average in line with school policy.

Student Code of Conduct
The purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is to define the general standard of conduct expected of students registered at The University of Western Ontario, provide examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this standard of conduct, provide examples of sanctions that may be imposed, and set out the disciplinary procedures that the University will follow. For more information, visit http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf.

Health and wellness
As part of a successful undergraduate experience at Western, we encourage you to make your health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students receive membership in Western’s Campus Recreation Center as part of their registration fees. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page (http://www.music.uwo.ca) or the McIntosh Gallery
Further information regarding health and wellness-related services available to students may be found at [http://www.health.uwo.ca](http://www.health.uwo.ca).

If you are in emotional or mental distress, please refer to Mental Health@Western ([http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/](http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/)) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: [https://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/education/module.html](https://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/education/module.html).

**Accommodation for Medical Illness or Non-Medical Absences**


The University recognizes that a student’s ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student’s overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities.

A UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is required where a student is seeking academic accommodation. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician or walk-in clinic. An SMC can be downloaded under the Medical Documentation heading of the following website: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf)

Documentation is required for non-medical absences where the course work missed is more than 10% of the overall grade. Students should contact their Faculty Academic Counselling Office (not the professor or the TA) for what documentation is needed in their program.

Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner. Documentation for any request for accommodation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the appropriate Academic Counselling Office of the student’s Faculty of registration. For BHSc students, you may go to the School of Health Studies Office in HSB room 222.

**Electronic devices**

**During Exams:** Unless you have medical accommodations that require you to do so, or
explicit permission from the instructor of the course, you may not use any of the following electronic devices during ANY of the tests, quizzes, midterms, examinations, or other in-class evaluations: cellphones, smart phones, smart watches, smart glasses, audio players or recorders of any sort, video cameras, video games, DVD players, televisions, laptop/notebook/netbook computers, flashlights or laser pointers.

**During Lectures and Tutorials:** Although you are welcome to use a computer during lecture and tutorial periods, you are expected to use the computer for scholastic purposes only, and refrain from engaging in any activities that may distract other students from learning. From time to time, your professor may ask the class to turn off all computers, to facilitate learning or discussion of the material presented in a particular class. **Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of lectures – nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.**

**English Proficiency for the Assignment of Grades**
Visit the website [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/english.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/english.pdf)

**Scholastic Offences**
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:

Additionally,
1. Plagiarism and self-plagiarism are considered academic misconduct, will be reported, and may result in a failing grade.
2. All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com ([http://www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)).
3. Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

**Support Services**
There are various support services around campus and these include, but are not limited to:

1. Student Development Centre -- [http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/)
2. Student Health – [http://www.uwo.ca/health/services/students/index.html](http://www.uwo.ca/health/services/students/index.html)