

**Rise of a Therapeutic Culture:  
Constructions of Selfhood in Modern America**  
HIUS181/281

Prof. Rebecca Jo Plant  
Fall 2010

Class hours: T 11-1:50  
Classroom: HSS 6008  
Office hours: TR 9:30-11:30

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This seminar will explore the growth and evolution of psychological thought in the twentieth-century, primarily but not exclusively in the U.S. We will track important developments in psychology, psychiatry and other related professions, while also exploring how the rise of a therapeutic ethos has altered conceptions of selfhood and the experience of emotional distress. We will also be analyzing how psychological thinking has reshaped family life and influenced political discourse, especially in regard such issues as race relations, gender identity, and sexual deviance.

**Required texts [available at UCSD Bookstore]:**

Jonathan Michel Metzler, *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became the Black Disease*, Boston: Beacon Books, 2009

Ronald Bayer, *Homosexuality and American Psychiatry: The Politics of Diagnosis*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981, rev. 1987

Allan V. Horwitz and Jerome C. Wakefield, *The Loss of Sadness: How Psychiatry Transformed Normal Sorrow into Depressive Disorder*, Oxford University Press, 2007

Ethan Watters, *Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche*, New York: Free Press, 2010

**Course packet [available for order at: <http://www.universityreaders.com>]:**

Barbara Sicherman, "The Uses of a Diagnosis: Doctors, Patients and Neurasthenia," *Journal of the History of Medicine and the Allied Sciences*, 32(1977): 33-54

Excerpt from John Watson, *Psychological Care of Infant and Child*, New York: W.W. & Norton Co., 1928, 69-87

Andrew Lakoff, "Adaptive Will: The Evolution of Attention Deficit Disorder," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 36:2 (2000): 149-69

Frances Clarke, "So Lonesome I Could Die: Nostalgia and Debates Over Emotional Control in the Civil War North," *Journal of Social History* 41:2 (2007): 253-82

Wilbur J. Scott, "PTSD in DSM-III: A Case in the Politics of Diagnosis and Disease," *Social Problems* 37:3 (1990): 294-310

Excerpt from Martin Duberman, *Cures: A Gay Man's Odyssey*, New York: Dutton, 1991, 29-62

Excerpt from Kramer, *Listening to Prozac: A Psychiatrist Explores Antidepressant Drugs and the Remaking of the Self*, New York: Penguin Books, 1993, 1-46

**Course requirements:** The main requirement for this course is a **15-page research paper**, to be based on a topic of your choice. The paper is due on December 6 (the first day of finals week) and will account for a full 70 percent of your grade. Each of you must meet with me individually during the first two weeks of classes to determine your topic. Then, in Week 4, you must submit a brief (2-3 page) preliminary synopsis of your paper, in which you explain the parameters of the topic, describe the major issues that you intend to address, and the time period that you expect to cover. In addition, you will need to provide a short (1 page) bibliography of secondary and primary sources.

**Participation** is the other key element of the course, accounting for 30 percent of your grade. You are expected to come to class having completed all of the readings and prepared to engage in meaningful and substantive discussion. **Every student will also be responsible for introducing a particular text** one week in the quarter. This will be determined on the first day of class.

During the last two weeks of the quarter, we will be “work-shopping,” or reading and commenting on each other’s papers. Each student must send out his or her paper to the entire class electronically on the Friday before he or she is scheduled to present. In class, you will give **a short presentation** about your findings and discuss any problems or issues that you encountered in writing the paper.

**All students will print out each paper out and read it carefully, marking it up for both content and style. Then students will write a paragraph-long critique of each paper, discussing the paper’s strengths and weaknesses. These critiques will be turned in to both the student and the professor.**

**Policy regarding late papers:** I will not accept late papers without penalty. A letter grade will be deducted for each day beyond the due date.

**Grading:** In this class, I grade holistically, meaning that I do not assign percentages to your papers and/or participation.

**Academic integrity:** I take the issue of academic integrity very seriously, and I will report suspected cases of cheating or plagiarism. Indeed, as a UCSD professor, if I suspect evidence of cheating or plagiarism in my class, I am *required* by the Office of the Academic Integrity Coordinator to file a report. (See the “Instructors’ Responsibility” and “Students’ Responsibility” sections of the [University’s Academic Integrity Statement](#).) Please do not make me take this step.

The problem of plagiarism has become more pervasive since the rise of the internet. Obviously, purchasing a paper or taking a paper (or any part of paper) off of a website violates the principles of academic integrity. But plagiarism is not limited to these flagrant examples. Any time you

take a sentence, or even a phrase, from another person's work without using quotation marks and providing proper attribution, you are plagiarizing. When you write a paper, the best way to avoid plagiarism is to do all the necessary reading, including on-line reading, in advance. Once you begin to write, you should not go on-line again until the paper is done. If you have any questions as to what is or is not plagiarism, please review the attached [MLA statement](#). If you still have questions, please contact me.

### **Weekly schedule:**

#### Week 1, September 28: Introductions

#### Week 2, October 5: Gender and neurasthenia

- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper” and “Why I Wrote the Yellow Wallpaper” (Both are available at various websites; a good one is: <http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/wallpaper.html>)
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: An Autobiography*, chapter VII and VIII (handout)
- Sicherman, “Uses of a Diagnosis” (course reader)

#### Week 3, October 12: Childrearing and the experts

- Nancy Pottisham Weiss, “Mother, the Invention of Necessity: Dr. Benjamin Spock's *Baby and Child Care*,” *American Quarterly*, 20 (Winter 1977): 519-46 (handout)
- Excerpt from Benjamin Spock, *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*, New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1946, pp.1-22, 254-255, 484-492 (handout)
- Excerpt from Watson, *Psychological Care of Infant and Child* (course reader)
- Lakoff, “Adaptive Will” (course reader)
- Recommended: Malcolm Gladwell, “Running from Ritalin,” available at <http://www.gladwell.com/pdf/ritalin.pdf>

In class: View Frontline documentary, *Medicating Kids*

#### Week 4, October 19: War trauma (**Paper synopsis due**)

- Clarke, “So Lonesome I Could Die” (course reader)
- Wilbur, “PTSD in DSM-III” (course reader)

In class: View part of the John Huston documentary, *Let There Be Light* (1946)

Week 5, October 26: The psychology of race

- Metzl, *Protest Psychosis*, preface, parts I-IV (pp. ix-128)
- Watch short interview with Dr. Jonathan Metzl, “Who Decides What Insane Means?” on bigthink.com

In class: View excerpts from Samuel Fuller film, *Shock Corridor* (1963)

Week 6, November 2: Homosexuality and psychiatric authority

- Bayer, *Homosexuality and American Psychiatry*, 3-40, 67-154, 179-95
- Excerpt from Duberman, *Cures* (course reader)

Week 7, November 9: Depression and psychopharmacology

- Horwitz and Wakefield, *The Loss of Sadness*, chaps. 1, 7, 8, 11
- *Crazy Like Us*, chap. 4
- Excerpt from Kramer, *Listening to Prozac* (course reader)

Week 8, November 16: Psychiatric diagnosis in a global age

- Watters, *Crazy Like Us*, Introduction, chaps. 1-3

Week 9, November 23: Course presentations and discussion

We will be work-shopping **pre-distributed** drafts

Week 10, November 30: Course presentations and discussion

We will be work-shopping **pre-distributed** drafts

**Papers are due on Monday, December 6** in my box (5<sup>th</sup> floor, HSS) or under my office door.