

psychological anthropology

body, brain culture

convenor: Greg Downey

tutors: Edwina James
Anupom Roy

This unit outline for

2013

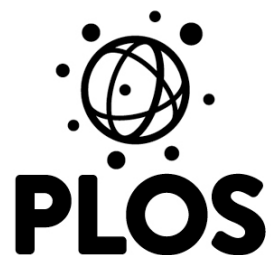
Semester 2
Macquarie University
Faculty of Arts



**ANTH
207**

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<http://blogs.plos.org/neuroanthropology>



Welcome to Anth 207. This unit guide is not official, but it does contain extensive information about the unit. The official unit guide is available at: https://units.mq.edu.au/2013/unit_offerings/ANTH207/D2.

Overview

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Around the world and across time, human cultural variation has extended into the depths of the human psyche, shaping profoundly different ways of being human. Are we all the same 'deep down' or do the ways we treat emotion, conflict, social interaction, cognition, and other dimensions of life leave irreducible differences among people?

Anthropologists have to confront firsthand the possibility that we are all not the same: some people die from syndromes that we do not recognize, or routinely recover from psychiatric conditions that we find virtually irreversible. We find societies with emotions that are unfamiliar, who describe 'selves' that seem alien to us, who seem to defy what we think of as 'human nature.'

And yet, we are all one species, shaped by evolution and our biology to possess distinctive

human brains as well as forms of consciousness, cognitive ability, empathy, memory and imagination. How do we reconcile the variation with our shared humanity? In this unit, we seek to understand human psychological variability by exploring the extremes: religious conversion in prison, the sensory abilities of athletes, the 'selves' of people who routinely become possessed, the respect hunting peoples have for the animals they kill, the cognitive abilities of those people without language, or the way that culture affects even the trajectory into madness.

Anth 207 introduces students to the wide variety of emotional, cognitive, developmental, and perceptual dynamics across cultures. Psychological anthropology studies the relation between individual psychology and sociocultural diversity, for example, between pathology and

Lectures are held Thursdays during session from 2 to 4 pm in the Lotus Theatre (W6D). Lectures are all recorded and material (such as slides, Prezi links, and links to video clips) are all available through iLearn. Slides are available in advance if students wish to print them off prior to lecture.

The lecturer expects students to be respectful and keep distractions to a minimum during lecture. Although we are happy to take questions, the convenor reserves the right to refer longer discussions to tutorials, office hours, or outside the lecture time slot as we have limited time in which to cover the required material. Please,

also, turn off mobile phones and other communication devices during all university lectures. If your phone rings, the convenor reserves the right to answer it for you.

If there are any students with specific learning problems, they should contact Equity and Disability Support, contactable on equity@mq.edu.au or visit www.sss.mq.edu.au/equity/ for more information about their services and contacts.

If students need to request special consideration, they must follow procedures and apply through the Faculty of Arts website.

status hierarchy, between personality and childrearing practices, or between perceptual ability and a society's ideologies about the senses or forms of training.

We will explore a wide range of perspectives, from evolutionary psychology to neuroanthropology, and address such topics as human cognitive variation, the effect of language on thought, emotional variation in experiences like grief, love and anger, altered states of consciousness including spirit possession, and cultural variation in insanity and impairment.

Anth 207 is designed for students who want to explore the variety of human experience, including profoundly alien ways of experiencing the self or being human. The convenor is a leader in the emerging field of

neuroanthropology bringing together new research about the brain with field based studies of human life in a wide variety of cultures. The point is not simply to catalogue the odd and curious, but to use the variation we find to better understand how our human nervous system and social worlds combine to produce a wide variety of 'normal.'

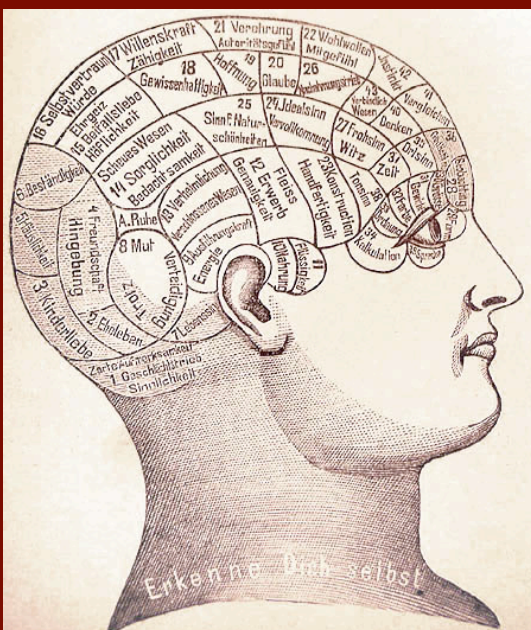
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Learning Outcomes

1. Discover the variety of humanity, including the peculiarity of Western traits, ways we understand ourselves, and social roles.

2. Interrogate 'human nature' to better understand the relationship between universal traits and variability.



3. Explore the role of social setting and norms in shaping human development.

4. Actively participate in discussion of psychological anthropology (such as gender roles, emotional variation, sex and gender across cultures, and childrearing).

5. Gain greater understanding of techniques for investigating experience, including ethnography, field research, and comparative approaches.

6. Investigate in greater depth one area of special interest in the study of human diversity.

7. Improve presentation and oral expression skills.

8. Improve writing and critical reading skills.



Are they crazy like us?

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In some places around the world, a person is considered vulnerable to losing his or her soul if surprised or horrified. The condition is so severe that some patients die before recovering. Similarly, anorexia nervosa appears to be a culture-bound syndrome, affecting some societies so profoundly that sufferers may find it very hard to stop themselves from profound self harm. Psychiatrists know that, over time, our disorders change, as the conditions that Sigmund Freud saw in his office no longer trouble patients today. How do societies produce different forms of mental disorder and psychological distress, and what sorts of mechanisms do they use to try to help individuals recover?

Tutorial policies

Tutorials begin in the second week of the semester.

Everyone must be enrolled in and attend a tutorial. You should have already enrolled in a tutorial when you enrolled in the course.

If you need to enrol in a tutorial or have to change times, do so at Macquarie University's online student portal.

If you have simple questions about the unit, marking, assessments or the like, we suggest that you approach your tutors first, as they will likely be easiest to access, or look on iLearn.

Tutorial Attendance: You can miss two tutorial sessions without penalty (see Assessment policy below). Be sure to attend, and to sign the roll sheet at each

session. If you cannot attend your regular tutorial, try to attend at another time. Note the day, time and room of your usual tutorial group on the roll if you are attending a tutorial other than the one for which you enrolled. If you are sick or having a crisis, your tutor will be able to get credit for missed attendance in most circumstances, but you **MUST** apply through special consideration through the Faculty of Arts website.

The purpose of tutorials in this course is to foster informed discussion. Therefore, you **MUST** read the assigned material before your tutorial; if a TA finds that you have persistently not read the material, you will not have your attendance counted. If you find the material difficult or there are things you don't understand in the readings, bring your questions to discuss. Tutorials are intended to help reading comprehension.

Tutorial program

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Tutorial One: Evolution

What makes human cognitive abilities different from those of other animals? What are the key qualities of our cognitive ability that set us apart evolutionarily from other animals?

Tutorial Two: Emotions

Are their different spheres of activity in your lives where the 'emotion rules' vary? If so, how? In what ways do the emotions you feel or express help to define who you are?

Tutorial Three: Childhood

Having read the article for this week, and perhaps having attended the lecture or tutorials, how would you explain the extreme dependency and self-imposed lack of competence that the authors find in some children in the US? What might be the social function or adaptive consequence of this pattern, or is there some other non-functional explanation that makes sense to you?

Tutorial Four: Sexuality

Human sexuality is more variable than many of our ideologies recognise; anthropologists have frequently pointed to Melanesian semen practices to illustrate this variation. Both the readings for this week, however, demonstrate that 'sexuality' itself is a cultural concept. What advantages do we gain by breaking down 'sexuality' into a number of concepts?

Tutorial Five: Senses

In what ways do you think your upbringing, education or training (cultural influences) have affected the way you perceive through your senses? Try to think of two or three examples NOT covered in lecture. (Suggestion: Don't just consider

vision, but also your other senses, including bodily senses like pain perception, temperature, proprioception...)

Tutorial Six: Consciousness

Although there are dissenting traditions in the West (religious groups, drug-users, some subcultural groups), in general, our society is fairly hostile to altered states of consciousness or other forms of awareness. Why might Australia, like other Western societies, be so hostile to the possibility of other forms of awareness or consciousness? What might be gained by being open to the possibility of other forms of knowing?

Tutorial Seven: Self

After our discussion in lecture and the reading, what do you see as the forces in your life that might be most likely to cause you to experience your 'self' as being multiple or as being unitary? (Just a couple and what influence you think they'd have.)



Tutorial Eight: Oppression

According to Daniel Lende, there are a number of ways that poverty, stress, and forms of social deprivation affect an individual's psychological development. If we take these processes seriously, what are the implications for social policy? How does it affect our cultural understandings of individual achievement, failure, and opportunity?

Tutorial Nine: Dissociation

The two readings for this week discuss how dissociative experiences are treated quite differently in different settings. In one, they are treated as a possible precursor to insanity – a particularly devastating form, in fact – and in another the sign of potential spiritual talent or divine gift. Following on from the previous three weeks, how can we better understand the interaction of experiences of dissociation with local expectations for experience, consciousness and the self? Are some societies more likely to nurture dissociation?

Tutorial Ten: Insanity

How does our definition of 'psychopathology' or 'mental illness' affect people who receive that diagnosis? How do you think it affects their behaviour and the way that they are cared for?

Tutorial Eleven: Globalising Psychiatry

From your reading and the lecture and tutorials, how do you think psychiatric practice might be able to adapt better to helping people around the globe? What might be some concrete practices or concepts that might help those involved in counseling and other caring professions to better help people with diverse conditions and disease models?

Tutorial Twelve: Helping

What are some of the mental health issues where you think an anthropological approach might be especially useful? Draw on your own research projects, too, if you think that these are particularly good examples.

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Photo by Derrick Tyson, CC (BY)

Required readings:

All reading for the unit are available in a bundled course reader available at the Co-Op bookstore.

The unit reader is a low cost way of getting all the readings. We **EMPHATICALLY** recommend that you buy the reader in order to have the best access possible to all the materials for the unit.

Optional readings:

Some of the readings are marked 'optional.' You will *not* be quizzed on these readings, as they tend to be journalistic accounts. However, they are excellent introductions to key issues.

| Assessment | task | description | notes |
|------------|---|---|--|
| | Tutorials 10% | Attendance in tutorial and participation in discussion is required. Please make sure to sign in for attendance record. Students may miss up to two sessions without suffering penalty. | See outline for reading and tutorial program for key questions. For students who feel like they still are not clear on key issues or would like to continue discussion, see iLearn. |
| | Weekly quizzes 25% | Students can either take the weekly quiz in the lecture OR online after the lecture (2 hours after). The quiz done in class may include discussion questions; all questions online will be multiple choice because of the demands of marking. | No makeup quizzes are allowed. You can miss two quizzes with no penalty. Your ten highest scores will be counted. Quizzes in lecture will NOT be the same as those online. |
| | Online Tests 10% + 15% | During Week Seven and during the Exam Period, students will be required to take a short online exam. Exams are multiple choice and open book, with at least 20 questions on midterm and 30 on final. | Online tests are time-constrained, but they are open book and open note. Students will be able to take them online over a period of two days. 12 September and 11 November. |
| | Research project 40% | Students are required to submit a research project on a topic of their choosing, closely related to themes from this unit. The | On iLearn, you will find an extensive discussion of how to find a research topic and how to proceed to conduct the research. |

Assessment rationale

Unit assessment tasks are designed to reward students for managing the wide range of material in this unit, and to encourage students to develop general graduate capabilities. The quizzes and tests, being open book, are designed not simply to test memory but to focus on key concepts. Like the tutorials, these assessment tasks are designed with sufficient leeway to allow students to manage their own workloads reasonably.

See the online Unit Guide for complete rationale, including specific links between assessment tasks and graduate capabilities.

Unit rationale

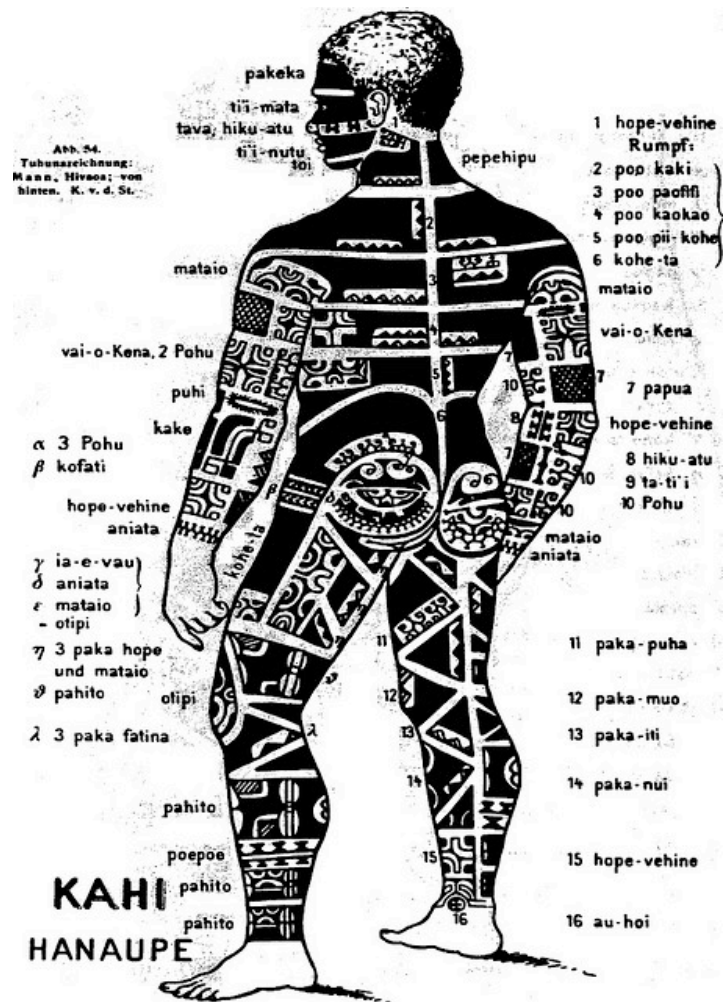
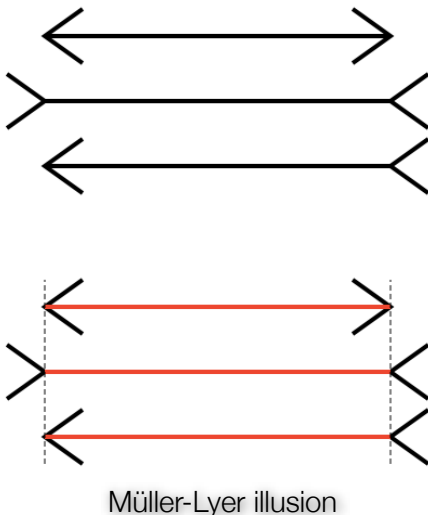
Psychological variation among social and cultural groups is one of the most important insights offered by anthropology to related fields, including education, psychology, neurosciences, and a host of other research disciplines. The unit is designed to alert students to this variation and to the dangers of overlooking that variety, especially in applied fields, including psychopathology, social services, health policy, development, teaching, and international aid. Students are encouraged, as well, to develop specialised knowledge through an individually designed research project of their choice.

Please note: all slides and other teaching materials are being reviewed. The new versions will be made available as soon as possible through iLearn.

WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTION

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The lecture introduces the field of psychological anthropology, including some of its key early practitioners. Specifically, we will discuss the historically close relations between psychology and anthropology, and why the two fields became isolated from each other in the twentieth century. The isolation has had profound effects on both fields, but rectifying the situation will be quite difficult as the way each field seeks to investigate and describe the human condition is so divergent. We will also cover practical issues, such as unit requirements, procedures, and resources.



Everything is simpler than you think and at the same time more complex than you imagine.

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

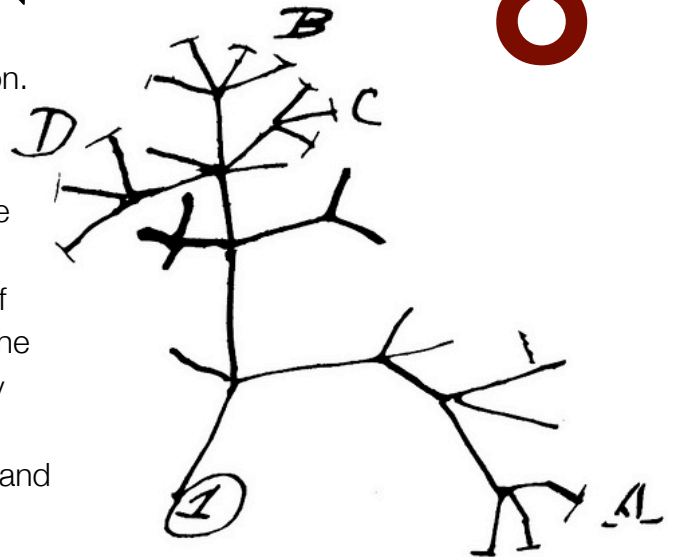
Key reference:

Henrich, J., Heine, S.J., and Norenzayan, A. 2010: The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33, 61-135.

WEEK TWO: EVOLUTION

8

The human brain is the result of our species' evolution. Even though the gap between human and animals can appear enormous, in fact, we have evolved from other animals without our spectacular cognitive abilities, so the organ itself is built on a model that we share with other species. How do we differ from other species in terms of our neurological endowment, but how, also did we get the peculiar brains that we have? This lecture will specifically discuss some of the problems with 'evolutionary psychology' from the perspective of evolutionary theory and anthropology.



Note:
Tutorial
meets for
the first
time in
week
two.

Required readings:

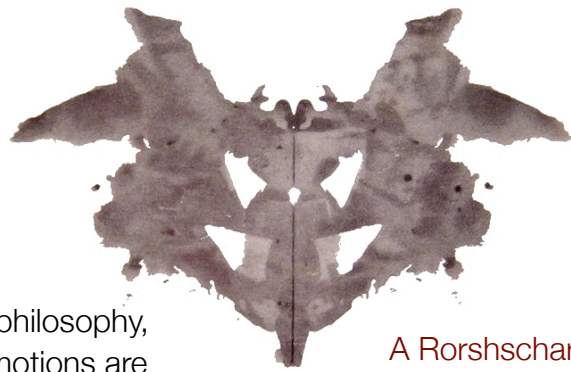
Downey, Greg, and Daniel Lende. 2012. Evolution and the Brain. In D. Lende and G. Downey, eds. *The Encultured Brain: An Introduction to Neuroanthropology*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. Pp. 103-137.

Optional reading: Wexler, Bruce E. 2011. Neuroplasticity: Biological Evolution's Contribution to Cultural Evolution. In *On Thinking: Culture and Neural Frames of Cognition and Communication*, Shihui Han, and Ernst Pèoppe, eds. Berlin: Springer. Pp. 1-17.



"I'm a hunter, but I've been cross-trained as a gatherer."

WEEK THREE: EMOTIONS



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A Rorschach test
(ink blot)

Since the Romantic movement in Western philosophy, many in the West have been convinced that emotions are true and authentic, and that not expressing emotions can lead to ill health, psychological problems, and even madness. Initial evolutionary research was seen to support this, as evidence of 'universal' facial expressions seemed to suggest that evolution was pre-cultural (see the suggested reading). But more careful study shows that emotion is a complex mix of the involuntary and the strategic, liable to manipulation both within groups and across cultures. In this week, we examine anthropological approaches to emotion and the evidence for the ways that emotion is a complex mix of social and psychological factors.



Photo by Caitlin Childs, CC (BY SA)

Required readings:

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1983. Excerpt from *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 3-34.

Shweder, Richard A., Jonathan Haidt, Randall Horton and Craig Joseph. 2008. *The Cultural Psychology of the Emotions: Ancient and renewed*. In *Handbook of Emotions*, Third Edition, M. Lewis, J.M. Haviland-Jones, and L.F. Barrett, eds. New York: Guilford Press. Pp. 409-427.

Optional reading:

* Fischer, Shannon. 2013. *About Face*. Boston Magazine (July) online edition.





WEEK FOUR: CHILDHOOD

Virtually every psychological theory argues that childhood influences can have profound effects on individual development, but diverse societies have quite different expectations for children, providing them with diverse forms of education, emotional interaction, and physical care. To understand the role of childrearing in shaping our psychological profiles requires that we distance ourselves from very strong normative assumptions about what children 'need' and how it is proper to treat them. We consider such diverse topics as sleeping, breast-feeding, childcare and safety, adolescence and schooling.

The opposite of a correct statement is a false statement. But the opposite of a profound truth may well be another profound truth.

– Niels Bohr



Optional introductory reading:

* Kolbert, Elizabeth. 2012. Spoiled Rotten: Why do kids rule the roost? The New Yorker (2 July). Available online. Optional.

Required readings:

Ochs, Elinor, and Carolina Izquierdo. 2009. Responsibility in Childhood: Three Developmental Trajectories. *Ethos* 37(4): 391-413.

Hill, Robert F., and J. Dennis Fortenberry. 1992. Adolescence as a Culture-Bound Syndrome. *Social Science & Medicine* 35(1): 73-80.



Both photos by Martin Beek, CC (BY SA)

WEEK FIVE: SEXUALITY

Like emotion, our sexuality – what and who we desire, what arouses us, what repels us – can seem to be so natural and deeply-ingrained that we sometimes believe it is inevitable. Evolutionary theories of sexuality which focus on reproduction and sexual competition can contribute to a folk theory about the differences between men and women, and the inescapability of some types of desire. But the evidence is far more varied; across societies, humans seem capable of adapting to a wide variety of norms, both in terms of what types of sexual and reproductive relations they have and in terms of how they will feel about them. This lecture explores the anthropological study of sexuality, including the physical variation that most Western systems of organising sex tend to ignore and in relation to a particular case of sexual variation that bedevils our sometimes taken-for-granted understandings of sexuality: same-sex initiation cults and 'sperm economies' in Melanesia.

We must recognize that beneath the superficial classifications of sex and race the same potentialities exist, recurring generation after generation, only to perish because society has no place for them.

— Margaret Mead

Required readings:

Fausto-Sterling, Anne. 1993. The Five Sexes. *The Sciences* (March/April) 33(2): 20-25.

Elliston, Deborah A. 1995. Erotic anthropology: "Ritualized homosexuality" in Melanesia and beyond. *American Ethnologist* 22(4): 848-867.

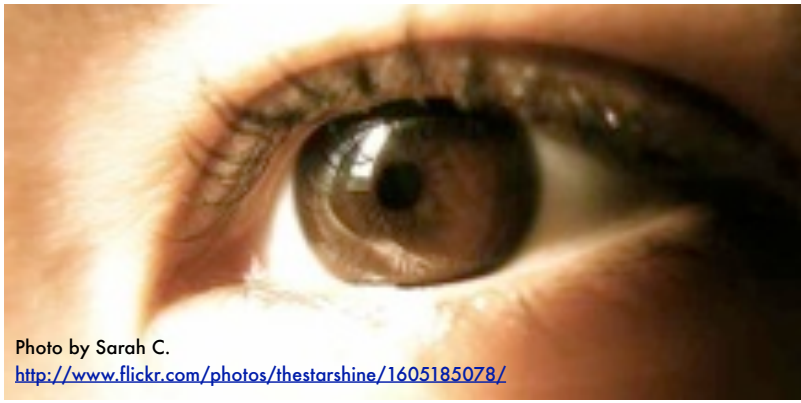
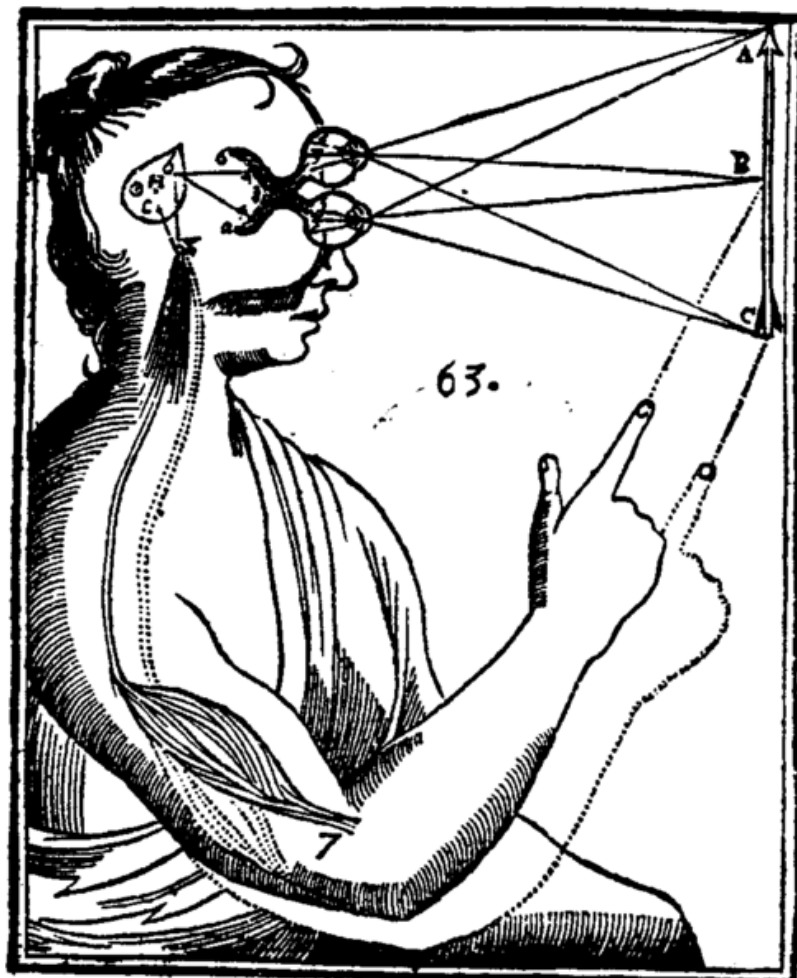


Photo by Sarah C.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/thestarshine/1605185078/>

WEEK SIX: SENSES

Through the senses we come to know the world. At the same time, sensory experience shapes the brain and nervous system. The close study of other cultural systems suggests that the ways that diverse people experience the world may be shaped by different ways of sensing, including subtle sensory biases and sensory training. This lecture explores sensory variation, including issues like visual bias in the West, and how we might study sensory variation.



Required readings:

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Geurts,
Kathryn Linn.

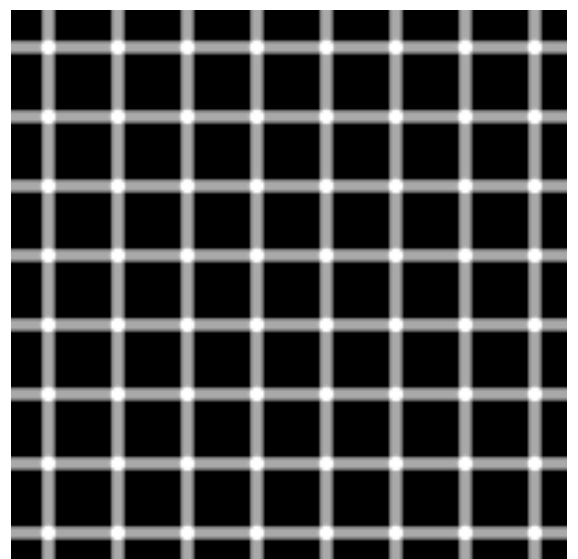
2002. Is there a sixth sense?

In *Culture and the Senses: Bodily Ways of Knowing in an African Community*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 3-19.

Stoller, Paul. 1989. Sound in Songhay Sorcery. In *The Taste of Ethnographic Things: The Senses in Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 113-122.

We don't see things
as they are; we see
them as we are.

– Anais Nin



"Mystical insight and enlightenment occur when the veil between the worlds is lifted, the worlds are bridged, the gap closes, and we cross over."

— Tom Cowan

WEEK SEVEN: CONSCIOUSNESS

One of humans' most exotic abilities is their distinctive forms of awareness: conscious, with elaborate memories, the ability to perceive themselves and examine their thoughts, even the capacity for self deception. How does consciousness arise, and to what degree is it a skill or learned capacity? Across cultures, anthropologists find that people understand consciousness and altered states of consciousness in diverse ways. In particular, we will discuss animism or the belief that non-human or non-living beings – animals, the dead, natural objects – have awareness, and the forms of consciousness that this belief leads to among those who hold it.

Required readings:

Sullivan, John Jeremiah. 2013. One of Us. *Lapham's Quarterly*. <http://www.laphamsquarterly.org/essays/one-of-us.php?page=all>

Willerslev, Rane. 2004. Not Animal, Not Not-Animal: Hunting, Imitation and Empathetic Knowledge among the Siberian Yukaghirs. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) 10: 629-652.

PLEASE NOTE: THE WILLERSLEV READING IS NOT EASY, BUT IT'S WELL WORTH IT.



Photo by Keith Schengili-Roberts
Wikimedia, CC (SA, BY)

"Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate."

— C.G. Jung



WEEK EIGHT: SELF

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A sense of self can appear to be the most basic fact, so much so that Rene Descartes argued that it was the one thing that we can know for certain. Early anthropologists, however, were surprised to find that not every society seemed to have the same notion of 'self' that Westerners did. During this week's lecture, we examine the cultural and neurological bases of the sense of 'self,' including how this sense can vary. We will also discuss forms of self in our own societies that are widely judged to be 'pathological,' including 'multiple selves.'

Optional introductory reading:

* Michison, Amanda. 2011. Kim Noble: The woman with 100 personalities. The Guardian (1 October 2011): www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2011/sep/30/kim-noble-woman-with-100-personalities/print

Required reading:

Quinn, Naomi. 2006. The Self. *Anthropological Theory* 6(3): 362-384.

"I am not this hair, I am not this skin, I am the soul that lives within."

— Rumi

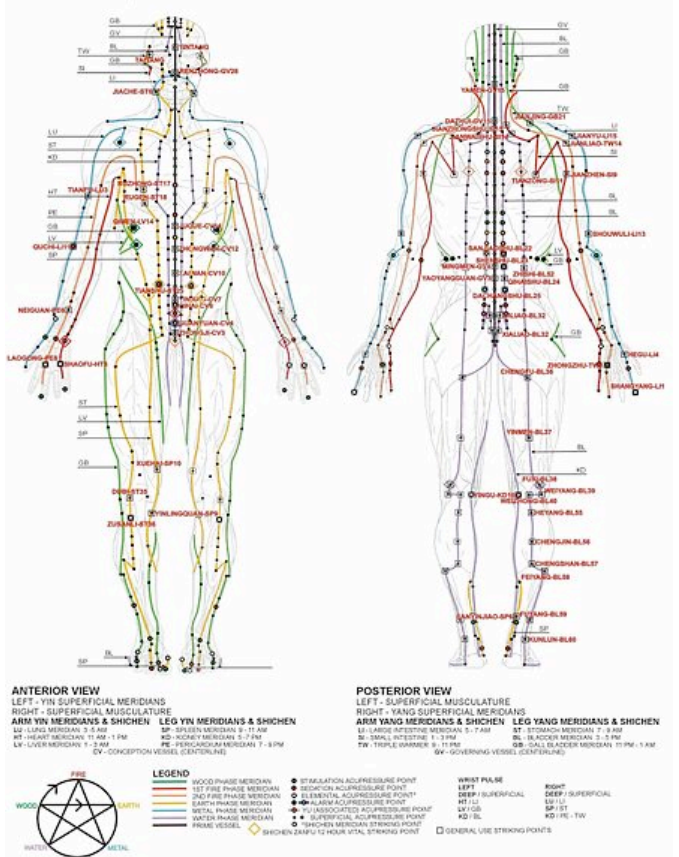
Leonardo da Vinci self portrait



"Celebrity is a mask that eats into the face."

— John Updike

Human body meridians



WEEK NINE: OPPRESSION

Researchers have long recognised that some environments produce 'mental illness'; one of the most damaging appears to be long-term oppression, hostility, and stress. In this lecture, we will discuss some of the bio-social mechanisms that can lead to a wide range of 'psychological' conditions, including everything from educational under-achievement to 'post-traumatic stress disorder' (in some settings). But we will also discuss the variety of forms of resilience, including the ways that unusual psychological mechanisms, even types of 'madness', may be ways of resisting or evading persistent social oppression.

Required readings:

Lende, Daniel. 2012. Poverty Poisons the Brain. *Annals of Anthropological Practice* 36: 183-201.

Ong, Aihwa. 1988. The Production of Possession: Spirits and the Multinational Corporation in Malaysia. *American Ethnologist* 15(1): 28-42.



Photo by Julian Kliner, CC (BY, NC)

"Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness."

— Karl Marx

"The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents... some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the light into the peace and safety of a new Dark Age."

— H.P. Lovecraft

Required reading:

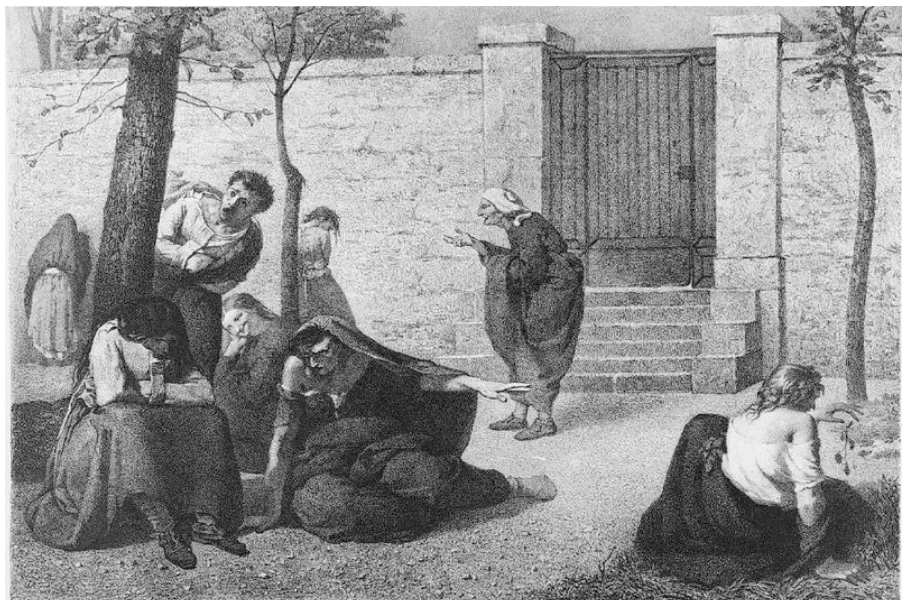
Aviv, Rachel. 2010. Which Way Madness Lies: Can psychosis be prevented? Harper's Magazine (December): 35-46.

Seligman, Rebecca, and Laurence J. Kirmayer. 2008. Dissociative experience and cultural neuroscience: Narrative, metaphor and mechanism. Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry 32(1): 31-64.



WEEK TEN: DISSOCIATION

Societies vary in how they treat individuals who appear to 'dissociate' or to disconnect from the world around them, or even see, hear or experience things that others do not. In this week we will discuss the margin of typical experience -- hearing voices, catching fleeting glimpses of aparations, losing awareness temporarily -- and how these sorts of behaviours trigger different responses across societies. In particular, we will discuss current debates in the Western psychiatric community about 'prodrome' of schizophrenia and the way that some Afro-Brazilian groups respond to and encourage the ability to disconnect from mundane reality.



"Show me a sane man and I will cure him for you."

— C.G. Jung

WEEK ELEVEN: INSANITY

How a society responds to psychological pathology can very much affect how an individual will suffer a psychological illness, how that condition will develop over time, and whether or not the individual will recover. The same conditions that might be considered dangerous or shameful in one place may be treated as an illness to be managed or even the mark of special talent or ability. In this lecture, we will explore how the expectations of society interact with conditions like schizophrenia, epilepsy, Tourette Syndrome, and Autism Spectrum Disorder. We will particularly explore findings by the World Health Organisation that the prognosis for recovery from some psychological conditions is much worse in the United States and Europe than in developing countries.



Kinjiro Ashihara (Japanese famous Schizophrenia patient, so-called "General Ashihara")

Required readings:

Desjarlais, Robert. 2000. The Makings of Personhood in a Shelter for People Considered Homeless and Mentally Ill. *Ethnos* 27(4): 466-489.

David Rosenhan, 1973. On Being Sane in Insane Places. *Science* 179: 250-258.

Optional reading:

* Luhrmann, Tanya Marie. 2012. Beyond the Brain. *The Wilson Quarterly* (summer): 28-34.



Benevolent Institution at Toowoomba, ca. 1902



Scientologists protest against psychiatry in the UK

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Required reading:

Swartz, Leslie. 1985. *Anorexia Nervosa as a Culture-Bound Syndrome. Social Science & Medicine* 20(7): 725-735.

Watters, Ethan. 2010. *The Rise of Anorexia in Hong Kong. In Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche.* New York: Free Press. Pp. 9-63.

WEEK TWELVE: GLOBALISING PSYCHIATRY

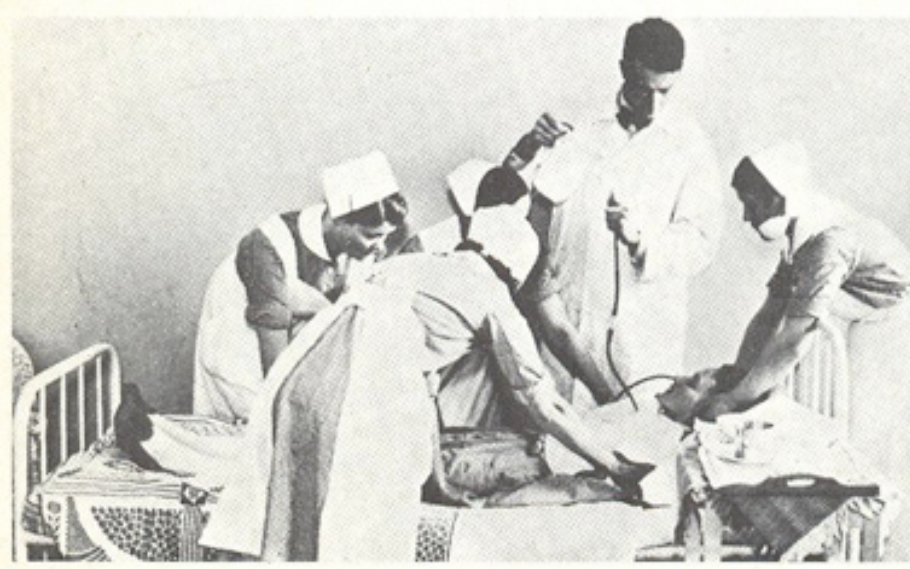
Increasingly, a Western model of psychopathology is being exported around the world. This model sometimes does not fit well with local understandings of the person or psyche, or even with the symptoms that distressed patients are manifesting. Some conditions that only appear in specific places – ‘culture bound syndromes’ – are indications that, just as our psychological profiles may not be identical, neither are our psychological illnesses. How does an increasingly globalised field of mental health interact with local varieties of distress? Specifically, we will discuss the case of anorexia nervosa, and whether the condition is a ‘culture bound syndrome’ that has been successfully exported, in part through the globalisation of psychiatry itself. Does Westernisation also involve becoming ‘crazy like us’?

Cats by Louis Wain, increasing abstractness attributed to schizophrenia

“Psychiatry in this place is like serving an in-flight meal in the middle of a plane crash. If I wanted to make you well, as a doctor, I should be giving you a parachute, not a cheese-and-pickle sandwich.”

— Chris Cleave





WEEK THIRTEEN: HELPING

Although it may be intellectually satisfying to show the limits of Western understandings of mental health, or how a sense of 'self' is not universal, what are the implications of this kind of variety for helping people who may be profoundly different to us? Does anthropology have anything to offer to those working in fields like disaster recovery, peace building, or human rights? In this week's lecture we'll discuss how we might apply anthropological approaches to psychology-related issues in a wide range of contexts, drawing on a number of successful (and a few unsuccessful) projects to understand the pragmatic role of cultural awareness in addressing human needs.



Hamatsa shaman, British Columbia

Required readings:

Kohrt, Brandon et al.
2012. Applying Nepali
Ethnopsychology to
Psychotherapy for the
Treatment of Mental
Illness and Prevention of
Suicide among Bhutanese
Refugees. *Annals of
Anthropological Practice*
36: 88-112.

People can only live
fully by helping
others to live. When
you give life to
friends you truly live.
Cultures can only
realize further
richness by honoring
other traditions. And
only by respecting
natural life can
humanity continue to
exist.

– Daisaku Ikeda