

Psychological Anthropology

SPRING 2002

CLASS PERIOD-- M, W 3 - 4:30, 100 Clough

PROFESSOR-- Susan Kus

OFFICE-- 105 Clough

OFFICE HOURS -- M, F 1-1:45; Tu 8:30-10, or by appointment

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COURSE STATEMENT

“The Primitive Mind” that is so empirically knowledgeable about the physical world that surrounds us (seen in skills as the use of medicinal plants, navigation of vast expanses of the Pacific, and astute observations of astronomical phenomena, for instance) also produces beliefs in witchcraft, totems and the efficacy of ritual, and integrates altered states of consciousness into societal norms. This “primitive mind” has fascinated European explorers, missionaries and “thinkers” from the time there has been sustained contact between European cultures and groups they have considered as “other.” From the beginnings of anthropology as an academic discipline, anthropologists have been interested in the relationship between “culture and personality”. Not only were many early anthropologists (of the 20’s, 30’s and 40’s) influenced by Freud’s work, but a few were actually trained as lay psychoanalysts. Freud, in turn, had read many of the available anthropological (and archaeological) works of the turn of the century. Anthropology and Psychology have some early and common roots

Today, anthropologists argue that rather than seeing the mind of “the other” as an imperfect or incomplete version of our own, a “primitive form”, we must approach it as an “alternative form.” In this course on Psychological Anthropology, we will be investigating questions such as: Do members of non-Western cultures “sense, feel and think” like members of Western cultures? Do individuals from a non-literate culture actually “reason” differently from members of a literate culture? How variable are indigenous theories of “personhood” and “personality”? Is one culture’s schizophrenic another culture’s saint? Are some psychological disorders specific to certain cultures? (For instance, our phrase “running amuck” comes from a Malay term used to describe an individual, most often male, who grabs a kris knife or machete and attempts to attack any person or animal in his path.) And how is it that close to 90% of the world’s populations (U.S. culture being in the minority) sanction some form of an “altered state of consciousness”?

This course is intended as a survey course of psychological anthropology. While time does not allow a complete survey or a comprehensive treatment of this fascinating field of inquiry, we will try to touch on some major topic including the history of relations between anthropology and psychology, classic problem orientations, and selected topics of interest in this field.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class attendance is mandatory and class participation is strongly encouraged. Besides assigned readings, this course requires the completion of several short assignments, 2 papers, a midterm and a final exam (essay format, take-home.)

Late papers and assignments will not be accepted except in the case of very extenuating circumstances. Should such a case arise permission to turn in a late assignment needs to be obtained before the due date.

Failure to adequately complete any assignment or to take any exam will result in a failing grade for the course. Unexcused absences and/or failure to participate in class can lower your grade significantly. In the case of a large number (3 or more) of unexcused absences a failing grade will be assigned for the course. You are asked to self-report on absences. Upon returning to class after an absence, you should sign the attendance notebook with the date of the absence(s) and the reason for the absence.

Incompletes are not normally given in this class. In the rare case where an incomplete may be in order, the student must obtain permission from the instructor and complete all paper work for the Registrar before the day of the final exam.

GRADING

Class participation	10%
Short Assignment on “Senses”	5%
Short Assignment on “Learning non-aggression”	5%
Short Assignment on “Culture bound syndromes”	5%
Paper I.....	20%
Mid-term (Lutz essay).....	10%
Paper II.....	25%
Final Exam.....	20%

COURSE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS
(readings are to be completed on or before the assigned days)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LECTURE TOPIC</u>	<u>READING</u>
Jan 9	Introduction to the course	
Jan 14	Early history of the discipline and classic period	Bock (Prelude & 2-5)
Jan 16	Culture and Personality: More variables and more cultures	Bock (6, 8-9)
	Make choice of autobiography	
Jan 21	MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY	Begin Lutz
		(complete for Feb 5)
Jan 23	“Sense-ability” -- are we all taking in the same information?	Bock (1)

Jan	28	“Sensuality” -- are we all directing our attention in the same way?	individual readings assigned from <u>Howe</u>
	30	“Sensuality” (cont.)	Jackson 1
Feb	4	“The nature of” emotions and motivations	Individual reading assigned from <u>Montagu</u>
Feb	2	Emotions & motivation (cont.)	Rosaldo
Feb	11	“Unnatural emotions” -- discussion of Lutz	finish Lutz
		Midterm handed out	
	13	Cognition: Language and Learning	Bock (10), Basso
Feb	18	Orality and Literacy	Riddington, Ong
		Midterm due	
	20	With mind, body and soul -- a concept of “ethos”	Briggs
Feb	25	Film	Begin Stoller&Olkes (complete for April 10)
	27	Paper 1 presentations	
		final paper topic approved by this date	
Mar	4	SPRING RECESS	
	6	SPRING RECESS	
Mar	11	Taking stock	Schwartz
	13	Group discussion of possible final paper topics	
Mar	18	The cultural construction of person and gender	Bock (7)
	20	"Hopi: Songs of the Fourth World"	
Mar	25	Symbols as lived and as thought	
	27	Symbolic “efficaciousness” (rituals and psychotherapy)	Turner
April	1	The “abnormal” cross-culturally	Jackson 2
	3	Culture-bound syndromes	Individual assignments from <u>Simon & Hughes</u>
April	8	ASC -- Altered States of Consciousness	Davis
	10	Discuss Stoller and Olkes	Finish Stoller&Olkes
April	15	Paper II presentations	
	17	Paper II presentations	

April	22	Culture change and culture crisis	Stephen, Scheper-Hughes
	24	Concluding remarks	Bock (postlude)

REQUIRED READINGS

Basic Texts (To be purchased):

Bock, Philip Psychological Anthropology: Continuity and Change in the Study of Human Action, 2nd edition

Lutz, Catherine Unnatural Emotions

Stoller, Paul and Cheryl Olkes, In Sorcery's Shadow

Reserve Readings:

***Howe, David** (ed.) -- The Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1991

- (1) Jackson, Michael -- "Knowledge of the body", Chapter 8 in Paths Toward a Clearing, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.

***Montague, Ashley** (ed.) -- Learning non-aggression: The Experience of Non-literate societies. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Rosaldo, Renato -- "Introduction - Grief and a headhunter's rage," in Culture and Truth, Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.

Ong, Walter -- "Some psychodynamics of orality", chapter 3 in Orality and literacy, London: Routledge, 1995.

Basso, Keith "Wisdom sits in places," in Senses of Place, S. Feld and JK. Basso (eds.). Santa Fe, School of American Research Press, 1996, pp. 53-90.

Briggs, Jean "Expecting the unexpected: Canadian Inuit Training for an Experimental Lifestyle," in Ethos, 1993, Vol. 19, No. 3, pp.259-287.

Riddington, Robin -- "Fox and Chickadee", in The American Indian and the Problem of History, C. Martin (ed.), New York: Oxford U, 1987.

Schwartz, Theodore "Anthropology and psychology: an unrequited relationship," in New Directions in Psychological Anthropology, T. Schwartz, G. White & C. Lutz (eds.) Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992, pp. 324-349.

Turner, Victor -- "Encounter with Freud: The making of a comparative symbolologist," in The Making of Psychological Anthropology, G. Spindler (ed.), Berkeley: University of California, 1978, pp. 558-583.

- (2) Jackson, Michael -- "The Witch as a Category and as a Person", Chapter 9 in Paths Toward a Clearing, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989, pp. 88-101.

* **R. Simons & C. Hughes** (eds.) The Culture-Bound Syndromes: Folk Illnesses of Psychiatric and Anthropological Interest. Dordrecht, Netherlands: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1985

Davis, Wade "Plants of the Gods," in his book Shadows in the Sun. New York: Broadway Books, 1998, pp. 155-168.

Stephen, Michelle Cargo Cults, Cultural Creativity, and Autonomous Imagination in Ethos, 1997, Vol. 25, No.3, pp. 333-358.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy "Hungry bodies, medicine, and the state: Toward a critical psychological anthropology," in New Directions in Psychological Anthropology, T. Schwartz, G. White & C. Lutz (eds.) Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992, pp. 221-247.

Paper Assignments

Paper I (suggested length 7-9 pages)

Choose an autobiography of a non-Western individual from the list at the end of this syllabus in consultation with me. (If you have an alternative autobiography not on the list speak to me about the possibility of using this source for your paper.) Use the following questions as a guide to structuring your first paper assignment.

One of the recurring issues in theoretical discussion in psychological anthropology and cross-cultural psychology is the tension between two perspectives that one can take in the study of the relationship of the individual to culture. One perspective would argue for the basic psychic unity of humans despite the influences of culture. The other position would argue for a cultural relativism that recognizes the major role that time, place and circumstance (i.e., society, culture and history) play in determining human perception, conception and behavioral expression. In reading the autobiography of an individual from another culture were you struck by any beliefs, behaviors, values or experiences that you might call "pan-human"? Were you struck, on the other hand, by any beliefs, behaviors, values or experiences that appeared so foreign to you that you had a difficulty in understanding or relating to them? Discuss some

aspect of the relationship between the individual and culture as you came to understand, appreciate or question it from your reading.

Culture and society continually impose behavioral constraints and demands on the individual. Culture also serves as the context of meanings, values and beliefs available to the individual. Yet despite what seems to be continuous pressure to conform in behavior and belief to some anonymous social ideal, humans end up with individual personalities. Individuals often express their individuality in rejecting traditional cultural behaviors and values. Yet it is also possible to express individuality by embracing and personalizing social and cultural values and behavior giving them an individual style and understanding. Discuss these issues with respect to the individual whose autobiography you have read.

Psychological anthropologists are most often interested in observing individuals and understanding the human experience within the context of everyday life rather than in controlled test situations. Has reading the autobiography of an individual from another culture posed interesting questions for psychological anthropology that might not arise from controlled experiments or the study of Western individuals? Are there some questions that could not be handled using more rigorous experimental or observational techniques? On the other hand, are there some questions that could lead to new and interesting studies amenable to quantitative or even experimental control? Discuss.

Paper II (suggested length 9-12 pages)

Choose a research topic that involves some aspect of individual perception, cognition, motivation, and/or behavior, etc. within a cultural context of order of meaning. (Your autobiography from the previous assignment might be a useful starting point) You should present your proposed research topic in written form for approval as early as possible and no later than February 23rd.

Some possible grand themes within which you may fine tune your focus:

socialization of gender roles (e.g., third genders, ritualized "homosexuality")

dreaming

culturally salient symbols

abnormality

altered states of consciousness

language and the social construction of "reality"

social institutions (e.g., religion, market economy) and the

shaping of motivation, perception, self-understanding, ritualized torture, scarification, etc.

values, alternat

SOME NON-WESTERN AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

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Simmons, Leo (ed.)
SUN CHIEF: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A HOPI INDIAN

Gandhi, Mohandas
AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY: THE STORY OF MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH

Gatheru, R. Mugo
CHILD OF TWO WORLDS: A KIKUYU'S STORY

Bizarro Upjan, Ignacio
SON OF TECUN UMAN: A MAYA INDIAN TELLS HIS LIFE STORY

Blackman, Margaret B.
DURING MY TIME: FLORENCE EDENSHAW DAVIDSON, A HAIDA WOMAN

Black Hawk, Sauk chief
BLACK HAWK: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Black Elk
BLACK ELK SPEAKS (speak to me about this one)

Crow Dog, Mary
LAKOTA WOMAN and her sequel --- Brave Bird, Mary OHITIKA WOMAN

Shostak, Marjoria
NISA: THE LIFE AND WORKS OF A !KUNG WOMAN

Ongka
ONGKA: A SELF-ACCOUNT BY A NEW GUINEA BIG-MAN

Left Handed
LEFT HANDED, A NAVAJO AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Lurie, Nancy
MOUNTAIN WOLF WOMAN, SISTER OF CRASHING THUNDER

Mokgatle, Naboth
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN UNKNOWN SOUTH AMERICAN

Morning Dove
MOURNING DOVE: A SALISHAN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Ngabidj, Grant
MY COUNTRY OF THE PELICAN DREAMING

Radin, Paul

CRASHING THUNDER: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN AMERICAN INDIAN

Rojas, Juan

I SPENT MY LIFE IN THE MINES: THE STORY OF JUAN ROJA, BOLIVIAN TIN MINER.

Saitoti, Tepilit Ole

THE WORLDS OF A MAASAI WARRIOR

Savala, Refugio

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YAQUI POET

Said-Ruete, Emily

MEMOIRS OF AN ARABIAN PRINCESS

Sugimoto, Etso

A DAUGHTER OF THE SAMURAI

Fools Crow

FOOLS CROW (Oglala Indian)

Sewid, James

GUESTS NEVER LEAVE HUNGRY: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JAMES SEWID, A KWAKIUTL INDIAN

Yogananda, Paramhansa

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI.

Mithcell, Frank

NAVAJO BLESSINGWAY SINGER: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF FRANK MITCHELL

Katsu, Kokichi

MUSUI'S STORY: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A TOKUGAWA SAMURAI.

Sayers, Peig

PEIG: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF PEIG SAYERS OF THE GREAT BLASKET ISLAND.

Browne, Martha Griffith

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A FEMALE SLAVE.

Tret'iakov, Segei Mikhailovich

A CHINESE TESTAMENT: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF TAN SHIH-HUA AS TOLD TO S. TRETIAKOV.