

HLTH AGE 4Q03: Representations of Mental Illness
Fall 2016

Instructor: Dr. Mat Savelli
E-mail: savellm@mcmaster.ca

Office: Kenneth Taylor Hall Rm 230
Office Hours: Wed, 3:30-6pm

Course Description: Increasingly, stories and experiences relating to individuals diagnosed with mental health-related problems are being recognized as fundamental to the study of mental illness. Personal narratives and third party accounts do not merely “tell a story” - they may be used to re-evaluate government healthcare policy and reshape treatment regimens. These representations also play a central role in shaping social understandings of mental health and mental illness. This course asks students to examine representations of mental illness through a variety of mediums, including film, literature, autobiography, poetry, music, blogging, diaries, and art.

Course Objectives: After the course, students should have a strong grasp on how representations of mental illness have contributed to popular ideas about mental health. Students should come to appreciate the key differences in how various social actors have depicted the issue of mental illness, including physicians, government officials, and individuals diagnosed with mental illness themselves. Students should also be able to explain how representations of mental illness have been mobilized by the consumer/survivor movement to challenge the biomedical conception of mental illness.

Required Texts:

- 1) All materials are available on [Avenue to Learn](#).

Classes:

Tues Sept 6: Introduction to narratives and representations

Tues Sept 13: News media coverage of mental illness

Media: “Healing Hasidic Masturbators and Adulterers - With Psychiatric Drugs” / “Brave and Afraid” parts 1, 2, and 3 / “Madness”

Tues Sept 20: Doctors’ accounts

Media: Frantz Fanon, “Colonial War and Mental Disorder” / RD Laing, *Divided Self*, chapters 8 and 11 / Selected writings from Ronald Pies

Tues Sept 27: Film I

Media: *The Manchurian Candidate* (2004) / *He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not* (2002)

Tues Oct 4: Film II

Media: *Black Swan* (2010) / *Spellbound* (1945)

Tues Oct 11: No class (Fall Reading Week)

Tues Oct 18: Song (**Annotated Bibliography due**)

Media: The songs of the Ramones / The songs of Joy Division / The songs of Nirvana

Tues Oct 25: The Memoir/Novel I

Media: Perks of Being a Wallflower / Slaughterhouse Five

Tues Nov 1: The Memoir Novel II

Media: The Bell Jar / Girl, Interrupted

Tues Nov 8: Mad Magazines (**Outline due**)

Media: Madness Network News, vol 8, issue 1 / Phoenix Rising, vol 6, issue 1, 1986 / Mad Students: This Insane Life, issue 2, 2014.

Tues Nov 15: Advertising

Media: Print Ad collection / Video ad collection

Tues Nov 22: Family perspectives

Media: “When My Father Actually Lost His Mind” / “Reaching My Autistic Son through Disney” / “The Story of a Street Person”

Tues Nov 29: The State’s View

Media: “Should the Insanity Defense be Abolished?” / A Report on Mental Illness in Canada / Alberta Eugenics Laws

Tues Dec 6: Final class wrap up (**Essay due**)

Grade breakdown:

Essay Outline: 10%

Annotated Bibliography: 10%

Essay: 35%

Presentation: 20%

Weekly Participation: 25%

Annotated Bibliography: In preparation for their major essay, students are required to complete an annotated bibliography. Please be sure to use APA formatting for the bibliography and provide a short summary for each source and discuss how you will be using it within your major essay. You should include a MINIMUM of ten sources at this stage, although it is expected that students will continue to consult new sources while completing their essay.

Essay Outline: Students are required to submit a 2-3 page preliminary outline of their final paper in point-form. It should outline how you plan to introduce your subject, your major argument (thesis), and how you plan to support your thesis. The outline should be fully referenced.

Weekly Participation: Class attendance and participation are mandatory requirements to succeed in this course. Classes primarily take the form of discussion, and students will be graded for the quality of their contributions. Students should aim to ground their comments in both course material and real world experience. Although some people will naturally speak more than others, it is important that all students aim for regular contributions to the discussion. It is critical that students stay on top of the reading material in order to ensure a good class discussion.

Presentation: Each student will be responsible for leading a 35 minute portion of class. During this time, students should provide a critical summary of the reading/representation of mental illness being discussed. This should NOT simply be a summary of what the representation is about; instead, students should ground their presentation in the broader context of discussions and understandings of mental health and illness. In addition to analyzing their material, students should prepare questions for the rest of the class. Sign up for topics begins during the first class.

Essay: Students are required to complete a 12 page, double spaced final paper in APA format on any subject relating to representations of mental illness. For example, you might choose to focus on a specific medium or instead investigate a particular theme across different genres/media. The paper should incorporate both primary materials (the representations under discussion) as well as secondary material (scholarly work on representations of mental illness). You may write on any topic of your choosing, but ALL topics should be cleared with the instructor well in advance.

Other Crucial Course Notes

- 1) Do not email the course instructor or TAs via Avenue to Learn. Direct all communication to our McMaster email addresses.
- 2) Students making use of MSAF's will have to complete all assignments at a later date. In other words, there is no chance that the grade for missed assignments or tests will be tacked onto the final exam.
- 3) Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day.
- 4) There will be absolutely no leniency on plagiarism. Don't copy and paste anything directly into your essay...even if you cite it!

If you require this information in an alternate/accessible format, please contact the Department of Health, Aging & Society at 905.525.9140 ext. 27227 or hasdept@mcmaster.ca.

Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities: Students who require academic accommodations must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652, or by email at sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf>

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

| MARK | GRADE |
|--------|-------|
| 90-100 | A+ |
| 85-90 | A |
| 80-84 | A- |
| 77-79 | B+ |
| 73-76 | B |
| 70-72 | B- |
| 67-69 | C+ |
| 63-66 | C |
| 60-62 | C- |
| 57-59 | D+ |
| 53-56 | D |
| 50-52 | D- |
| 0-49 | F |

Avenue to Learn: Course material will be posted on Avenue to Learn. Please check the site often to keep informed of important course information or announcements.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy: Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion. Email Forwarding in MUGSI: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html>
*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link

Academic Integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.