

PHIL 265 Sanity and Madness

T-TH 2:00 to 3:15PM, M-1-209

Professor: Dana Francisco Miranda

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Student Office Hours (Zoom):

M 1:00-2:30PM; W 1:00-2:30PM

Overview

In this course, we will explore normality and abnormality through the fields of psychiatry, medical science, philosophy, disability studies, madness studies, and psychosocial studies. In particular, students will examine how the concept of mental illness requires uncovering the meanings behind sanity, madness, and deviance. This course will also examine philosophical questions raised by mental “disorder” and our attempts to understand, treat, or live with the condition. Careful consideration will be given to the study of anxiety, depression, psychosis, trauma, delusions, and schizophrenia.

Course Objectives

The primary goals of the course are to have students develop an interdisciplinary framework for analyzing philosophical and psychological concepts that compromise studies of the psyche and consciousness. Students will delve into the main arguments and terms that pertain to these subjects in numerous conceptual fields and geographical areas. This will be a reading-intensive course.

Course Unit Instruction

This class is scheduled to meet for 2 ½ hours per week. Additional instructional activities for the course include attendance at various College events and associated writing activities/workshops distributed across the semester. Students will be expected to come to class prepared with critical questions they would like to raise and be prepared to listen to others. Lastly, I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus, as necessary. Therefore, students are advised to refer to the syllabus posted on Blackboard for the most updated version.

Policies

All UMass Boston policies are in effect. These include:

- **Grading Policy:** I will make every effort to provide grades and feedback within 14 days of when you have submitted the assignment. I will communicate if a change to this is necessary.
- **Policy on Academic Dishonesty:** As an academic community devoted to the discovery and dissemination of truth, the University of Massachusetts Boston insists that its students will conduct themselves honestly in all academic activities. Students are expected to refuse to engage in any activity unauthorized by university policy. Please be sure to review the Student Code of Conduct for Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures.
- **Students with disabilities requesting classroom or course accommodations** must complete a multi-faceted determination process through the Office of Disability Services prior to the development and implementation of accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services. Each

Accommodation Plan is individually and collaboratively developed between the student and the Lillian Semper Ross Center for Disability Services. If you have not already done so, please contact the Center to have a dialogue regarding your academic needs and the recommended accommodations, auxiliary aides, and services.

- If you are experiencing financial hardship, have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or do not have a safe and stable place to live, and believe this may affect your performance in this course, I would urge you to contact the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) or Student Support Services (SSS) for support. You may also discuss your concerns with me if you are comfortable doing so.

Some additional policies include:

- **Gender Pronouns:** All people deserve to be addressed in accordance with their identity, including correct or preferred names and self-identified gender pronouns. We will offer opportunities to share pronouns in class and ask that you not assume pronouns until they are explicitly stated. No one is required to share pronouns; if you do not, we will simply refer to you by name.
- **Email Communication:** At times I will communicate with the entire class using campus email systems, so it is essential that you regularly check your UMB email address or forward your UMB account email to your preferred email address. I encourage you to contact me via email with questions about the course, the material we cover in class, and assignments.
- **Policy on Children:** If you are a parent, you are welcome to bring your child to class. If they are interested and old enough to take part in the conversation, all the better. If they are babies, fine. If they need to breastfeed, fine. You probably have alternate arrangements, and your other professors might not have the same policy (and I respect that), but I just wanted to make my attitude about children explicit in case of preference or emergency. You are welcome here, and if you have dependents that need constant care or whose care has been interrupted, they are also welcomed.
- Everyone needs help at some point (and typically at multiple points) in their academic journey. If you or someone you know experiences academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings of anxiety or depression, we encourage you to seek support. Effective campus resources (such as Academic Support Services and Undergraduate Studies, Resources4U, the UHS Counseling Center, and the U-ACCESS Food Pantry) are here to help.
- No one will be asked to speak for a group (whether class, race, sexual orientation, age, religion, creed, disability, gender, or geography).

Assignments

Discussion Board (30%): For every week indicated as “Assignment Due,” students must comment on classroom readings. Students must add at minimum one question, observation, or provocation before class begins or choose to comment at least once on another student’s response. Students will be assigned to one of two groups (“Beacon” and “Harbor”). A Google Doc link will appear on our Blackboard homepage directing students to the proper document. Please note that students will have access to both documents, however, they are required to only participate in their respective group. Students will receive new group assignments mid-semester so that they may converse more fully with their class. Lastly, students have the option of forgoing 1 week of the Discussion Board. This may be used anytime during the semester.

Participation (10%): Attendance is mandatory. I understand that emergencies arise, so each student is allowed two absences. Each absence beyond the allotted two will result in a point deduction. However, in the case of illness, I do ask that students stay home as coming into class sick only risks spreading infections. Please contact me as soon as possible regarding any absences. In addition, to receive a respectable grade in this category one must not only show up, but also participate. This will primarily reflect a) Preparation for posing questions in the discussion period of class and b) Engaged listening and discussion contributions during this period; will be boosted by c) Participation and question-posing during the (ideally interactive) lecture segment. If you are at any point unsure how you are doing in participation and want to know, email me and we can begin a conversation. Students who are extremely weary of speaking in class can receive alternative assignments in lieu of in-class participation but must meet with me in the first two weeks of the semester (or within one week of enrolling if not enrolled during this period) to make arrangements.

Short Paper (20%): One essay submission of 700-750 words responding to prompts provided in advance. The paper will be due on the Friday of Week 7 (March 11, 2022). The short essay must be handed in electronically by midnight. Rubric:

- 5 points: Essay addresses all aspects of the question and does so in a thoughtful way, incorporating key insights from texts and class discussions, and suggests a reasonable, though possibly somewhat open-ended, answer.
- 4 points: Essay addresses the question adequately but struggles to reconcile different positions, either through internal inconsistencies (e.g., the essay defends a contradictory position) or through failing to grapple with central dimensions of the material.
- 3 points: Essay addresses the question but doesn't demonstrate any commitment to rigor or critical thought or fails to relate the question to material from the reading(s) and/or class discussions.
- 2 points: Essay is substantial but does not address the prompt.
- 1 point: Essay fails to address the prompt and lacks substance or coherence.

Essays that are late but no more than 48 hours late will be docked 1 point. Essays that are more than 48 hours late will be docked 2 points. Essays that are not turned in by the end of the semester will receive no credit. Essays receiving a grade of 3 or lower can be rewritten and submitted for re-grading.

Term Paper (30%): For the final paper, students must meet with me in person or must have digital approval on two conditions; for group papers, all members of the group must be present at this meeting together unless extraordinary circumstances dictate otherwise, and for undertaking a project not listed below. Term papers must be handed in electronically by midnight May 16, 2022. My policy is to deduct ten points for each day late. You may choose from any of these options:

- Position paper: Write a paper defending a philosophical position related to topics discussed in class or in the assigned readings. Solo: 1000 words. Group of 2: 1500 words.
- Research paper: Either a) Read 1-2 outside works and critically examine the reading or its relation to one or more of the required readings for the course, or b) Read and criticize a full book from which one of the required readings is drawn, or c) Propose a research project of your own, subject to instructor approval. Solo: 1000 words. Group of 2: 1500 words.

All essays must be double-spaced. My preferred font is either in Times New Roman or Garamond, however, students may generally select the font that is most aesthetically pleasing for them.

Assessments (10%): Students will complete mid-semester and end-of-class self-assessments so that we may better focus on qualitative and not quantitative evaluations. You will be reflecting carefully on your own work and the work of your peers. If this process causes more anxiety than it alleviates, see me at any point to confer about tips for self-evaluations. Please know that if an assignment does not feel productive, we can find ways to modify, remix, or repurpose the instructions.

Mid-semester assessments must be completed by midnight on March 12, 2022. Final assessments must be completed by midnight on May 18, 2022, after your final paper is turned in.

Guidance on Late Work

Missing a deadline is a stressful experience. Sometimes it's just the result of an acute situation, but sometimes it's the result of something more persistent—struggling with the material, life circumstances, or one's mental state—and the source of trouble is not always obvious from the inside. Students in these situations often blame themselves and as a result incur late penalties. Students sometimes even fail classes because they get paralyzed and ultimately never submit the assignment. If you are in this situation, I can help. If you are going to miss a deadline:

1. Email me as soon as possible so that we can construct a plan to get you back on track.
2. Students may also submit missing work until the end of the semester to receive partial credit.

Readings

There is no text for this course; all readings will be provided online. In addition, this course will also frequently compare the readings below with criteria provided in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-V).

Schedule

Week 1:

Jan. 25: Introductions. What is this course and who's in it?

Jan. 27: Philosophy and Psychiatry by Maurice Natanson

Recommended Reading: The Phenomenological Approach in Psychopathology by Karl Jaspers

Week 2:

Feb. 1: Conceptualizing Psychiatric Disorders Using “Four D’s” of Diagnoses by Timothy Davis

Feb. 3: Can Psychiatry Distinguish Social Deviance From Mental Disorder? By Mohammed Abouelleil Rashed and Rachel Bingham

Recommended Reading: The Concept of Mental Disorder: Diagnostic Implications of the Harmful Dysfunction Analysis by Jerome Wakefield

Assignment Due

Week 3:

Feb. 8: The Sane Society (Chapters I, II, IV) by Erich Fromm

Feb. 10: “Constructing Normalcy,” Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body by Lennard Davis + The Myth of Mental Illness by Thomas Szasz

Recommended Reading: The Normal and the Pathological (Excerpts) by Georges Canguilhem

Assignment Due

Week 4:

Feb. 15: “The Birth of the Asylum,” Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason by Michel Foucault

Feb. 17: On the Medicalization of Deviance and Social Control by Peter Conrad

Recommended Reading: “5 February 1975,” Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-1975 by Michel Foucault

Assignment Due

Week 5:

Feb. 22: Sly Normality: Between Quiescence and Revolt by China Mills

Feb. 24: Epistemically Adrift: Reflections on America’s Social Life-world of Psychopathology by Jake Jackson + Mad Is a Place; or, the Slave Ship Tows the Ship of Fools by La Marr Jurelle Bruce

Assignment Due

Week 6:

Mar. 1: Philosophy and Madness. Radical Turns in the Natural Attitude to Life by Wouter Kusters + From Phenomenological Psychopathology to Neurodiversity and Mad Pride: Reflections on Prejudice by Anthony Fernandez

Mar. 3: Mad Matters: A Critical Reader in Canadian Mad Studies: “A Denial of Being: Psychiatrization as Epistemic Violence” by Maria Liegghio + “Mad as Hell: The Objectifying Experience of Symbolic Violence” by Ji-Eun Lee

Assignment Due

Week 7:

Mar. 8: Women and Hysteria in the History of Mental Health by Cecilia Tasca, Mariangela Rapetti, Mauro Giovanni Carta, and Bianca Fadda + The Yellow Wallpaper by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Mar. 10: Mourning and Melancholia by Sigmund Freud + “Melancholy: History of a Concept,” Moody Minds Distempered: Essays on Melancholy and Depression by Jennifer Radden

No Assignment: Short Paper + Mid-Semester Assessment Due

Spring Break (Mar. 13 - Mar. 20)

Week 8:

Mar. 22: “The Nature of Depression,” Experiences of Depression: A Study in Phenomenology by Matthew Ratcliffe

Mar. 24: Depression, Intercorporeality, and Interaffectivity by Thomas Fuchs

Recommended Reading: Depression: Illness, Insight, and Identity by Mike Martin

Assignment Due

Week 9:

Mar. 29: The Origins of ‘*Hibakusha*’ as a Scientific and Political Classification of the Survivor by Akiko Naono

Mar. 31: Healing Requires Recognition: The Case for Race-Based Traumatic Stress by Thema Bryant-Davis

Recommended Reading: “Naming the Unnamable,” Bodies of Memory by Yoshikuni Igarashi + Racism and Psychological and Emotional Injury: Recognizing and Assessing Race-Based Traumatic Stress by Robert T. Carter

Assignment Due

Week 10:

Apr. 5: Anxiety: A Case Study on the Value of Negative Emotions by Charlie Kurth + Critically Anxious by Lauren Guilmette

Apr. 7: Situated Anxiety: A Phenomenology of Agoraphobia by Dylan Trigg

Recommended Reading: The Concept of Anxiety (Excerpts) by Søren Kierkegaard

Assignment Due

Week 11:

Apr. 12: Self and World in Schizophrenia: Three Classic Approaches by Louis Arnorsson Sass

Apr. 14: Ethics, Embodiment and the Voice-Hearing Experience by Lisa Blackman

Recommended Reading: “Listening to a Different Logic,” When the Sun Bursts: The Enigma of Schizophrenia by Christopher Bollas + Findings in a Case of Schizophrenic Depression by Eugène Minkowski

Assignment Due

Week 12:

Apr. 19: Finding Order Within the Disorder: A Case Study Exploring the Meaningfulness of Delusions by Rosa Ritunnano, Clara Humpston, Matthew R. Broome

Apr. 21: Possession/Trance Phenomena by Etzel Cardeña, Marjolein van Duijil, Lupita A. Weiner, and Devin B. Terhune

Assignment Due

Week 13:

Apr. 26: The Meeting Between Society and Psychiatry by Frantz Fanon + On Psychological Oppression by Sandra Lee Bartky

Apr. 28: “From Dispossession to Radical Self-Possession: Racism and Depression,” Depression: A Public Feeling by Ann Cvetkovich

Recommended Reading: Fanon and Psychiatry by Jean Khalifa + “Colonial Wars and Mental Disorders,” The Wretched of the Earth by Frantz Fanon + Racism as a Cause of Depression by Suman Fernando

Assignment Due

Week 14:

May 3: Madness & Oppression: Paths to Personal Transformation & Collective Liberation by The Icarus Project (Fireweed Collective)

May 5: Sick Woman Theory by Johanna Hedva

Recommended Reading: Medicalizing Mental Health: A Phenomenological Alternative by Kevin Aho

Week 15:

May 10: Class Review + Term Paper Workshop

Remember: Term Paper and Final Self-Assessment due next week.