ANTHROPOLOGY 155b
Psychological Anthropology

Janet McIntosh

Class: Tuesdays 4:40-7:30 pm, Pearlman 113
Instructor: Dr. Janet McIntosh
Office: Brown 207
Contact info: Office: 781-736-2215
Home (emergencies): 617-713-0351
Email: janetmc@brandeis.edu
Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday 11:00-12:00, or by appt.

TA: Allison Taylor
Office: Brown 223
Contact info: abtaylor@brandeis.edu
781-529-6454
Office Hours: Wednesdays 11-12, or by appointment

Course Description:

This course addresses the relationship between mind and culture by exploring and critiquing a broad array of approaches in psychological anthropology. We begin by examining psychoanalytic anthropology, learning how Freudian tenets about unconscious processes have been applied to cultural symbols and practices. We explore how psychoanalytic approaches might apply to aspects of culture in New Guinea, Sri Lanka, and the USA, and critique their potential shortcomings. We also examine theories of ritual, including its transformative properties, and its possible psychodynamic implications. Next, we examine the “culture and personality school,” a popular mid-century movement that worked from the assumption that significant parts of the personality will be similar for all members of a culture or even a nation. Then we explore cross-cultural studies of “selfhood,” emotion, and belief using ethnographic research from Bali, India, Brazil, Micronesia, and the USA to investigate how culture might shape foundational ideas of what a person is and what kinds of beliefs and emotions they ought to have. Finally, we turn to the issue of mental health, asking how cultures construct and address phenomena such as depression, multiple personality disorder, and so-called “culture-bound syndromes” of the mind and body. Throughout the semester, we will attend to broader theoretical matters such as the tension between human universals and cultural particulars, and historical shifts in the relationship between anthropology and psychological approaches.

Course Requirements:
1) Class attendance and participation
2) Participation in 4 discussions on the WebCT discussion board. Your TA will provide feedback and evaluation on the basis of your comprehension of the readings, and the sophistication and originality of your comments on the material. Discussion questions will be provided, but you need not address them directly.
3) 45 minute in-class midterm exam (short answers).
4) 5 page midterm paper.
5) 7 page final paper.

Grading:
1) Attendance/participation in class: 10%
2) Webct discussion participation: 20% (5% per discussion)
3) In-class short-answer midterm: 15%
4) Midterm paper: 25%
5) Final paper: 30%

Readings:
There is one required textbook for this class, available from Back Pages Books in Waltham (owned by a former Brandeis anthropology major!):


Back Pages delivers to campus. The way to order your book is to go to their website--

www.backpagesbooks.com/texthub

Any order received before midnight is delivered to Shapiro by 6 pm the next day, and someone from Back Pages will be waiting in the Shapiro atrium (very visibly) between 6 and 7:30 pm to distribute your book the day after you order it. If you don’t collect your book the day after you order it, it will be held at Back Pages Bookstore (unfortunately, the store doesn’t have a safe on-campus storage space for holding books). This means it’s up to you to pick up the book the evening after you place the order.

Several articles are available through on-line databases. In these cases, the database in question will be listed in capital letters after the article title on the syllabus (e.g. “JSTOR”).

All other readings are available in PDF form on WebCT. (If the reading is not in the Bock book and is not marked with the name of a database in capital letters on the syllabus, then it is on WebCT.)

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS**

**January 16th—Introduction, and plunging right in: Introduction to Psychoanalytic Anthropology**


January 23—Psychoanalytic Anthropology, Symbolic Interpretation, and the Ritual Process I


IN CLASS VIDEO: “The Sambia”

January 30—Psychoanalytic Anthropology, Symbolic Interpretation, and the Ritual Process II


IN CLASS VIDEO: excerpt from “Full Metal Jacket”

(WebCT discussion #1 by February 1.)

February 6—Understanding and Critiquing the “Culture and Personality School”


**February 13—Cultural Diversity in Models of the Self**


(WebCT discussion #2 by Feb 15)

**February 20—NO CLASS**

**February 27—The Consistency (or not) of the Person; the Tenuousness of “Beliefs”**


**March 6—Cultural Differences in Emotional Categories and Emotional Experiences**


(WebCT discussion #3 by March 8)

March 13—Culture and Psychological Disorders: the Startle Reflex and Latah


IN CLASS VIDEO: “Latah”

**45 minute midterm examination in class

March 20—Culture and Psychological Disorders: Symptoms, Models, and Politics I


March 27— Culture and Psychological Disorders: Symptoms, Models, and Politics II


**Midterm paper due**

April 3, April 10—NO CLASSES

April 17—Trauma, Psychology, Culture


[A short story may also accompany this week’s readings; TBA]

(WebCT discussion #4 by April 19)

April 24—Embodied suffering, Embodying dissent


IN CLASS VIDEO: “Les maîtres fous (The mad masters)”

May 1—Multiple Personality Disorder, and Dissociation as Coping/Healing Mechanism


IN CLASS VIDEO: “Dateline” special on exorcism
Evaluations

**Final paper due May 5**