Sociology 194a: Sociology of Mental Health and Illness

This course examines sociological approaches to mental health and illness. The focus of the course will be more on the history, definitions, social responses and consequences of conceptualizations and treatment of mental illness than on the development of individual conditions we deem to be mental disorders. While there will be some discussion of social factors related to mental disorder and types of mental health treatment, we will mostly examine these in the context of the social definition and response to what are seen to be psychiatric conditions. The majority of the reading in the course will be from the required books with some supplementary (and important) articles on LATTE. We will include both classic and contemporary sociological writings on mental health.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand sociological approaches to mental health and illness.
3. Evaluate the origins and consequences of social policies toward mental disorder.
4. Examine the emergence and application of specific categories of mental disorder.
5. Examine the integration of social and biomedical approaches to mental illness.
7. Assess the spread of Western psychiatric ideas and the globalization of diagnoses and treatment.

Expectations:

Students are expected to attend class regularly and be prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that week. I expect written assignments to be submitted on the day they are due and late submissions of written work will not receive full credit.

There will be two take-home essay examinations (mid-term and final) and the option of an independent research paper or power point presentation (on a topic to be approved) required of each student. Details of these assignments will be handed out in class and posted on LATTE. Midterm and final each constitute 30% of grade, independent paper or presentation 20% and class participation (including attendance) 20%.

Students are expected to adhere to university policies of academic integrity (see http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai). Suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Development and Conduct with appropriate sanctions and related consequences.

If a student has a documented disability please inform the professor at the beginning of the course and we will make necessary accommodations.
Books:
Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization* (1965)

Articles (all posted on LATTE):
Franz Kafka, excerpts from *The Metamorphosis*
David Karp, "Taking anti-depressant medications: Resistance, trial commitment, conversion, disenchantment." *Qualitative Sociology* 16 (4): 337-359
Latif Nasser, “Do some cultures have their own way of going mad?” *Boston Globe*, 2012

Course Schedule: (dates may be shifted a bit depending on class progress)

Introduction to Class  (Aug. 28)

I. History of Madness  (Sept. 2 & 4)
   a. Conceptualizing the mad from the bad
   b. Institutionalizing Madness
Readings:
Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, pp. 1-100
Burns, *Psychiatry*, pp. 1-34

II. The Rise of the Profession of Psychiatry and the Medical Model (Sept. 9)
Readings:
Burns, *Psychiatry*, pp. 35-53
III. Psychiatry and Social Control (Sept. 11)
   a. Institutionalization and the law
   b. Insanity defense
   c. Mental patients rights
   Readings:
   Goffman, *Asylums*, pp.1-169
   Rosenhan, “On being sane in insane places” (LATTE)
   Burns, *Psychiatry*, pp.64-99, 120-23
   Guest Lecture: Aaron Wirth, Dept. of History (Sept. 16)
   [Sept. 18: Discuss *Asylums* etc, Prof. Conrad is away]

IV. Triumph and failure of public mental hospitals and deinstitutionalization (Sep. 23)
   a. Transinstitutionalism
   b. The myth of the mentally ill homeless
   Readings:
   Rothman, “The Enduring Asylum” (LATTE)
   Websites:
   The State Hospital: In Memoriam – Website: www.1856.org
   Abandoned Asylum Website – www.abandonedasylum.com

V. The coming of diagnostic psychiatry (Sept. 30)
   a. Categorizing mental disorders: DSM-1 through DSM-5
   b. Diagnostic psychiatry and medicalization
   Readings:
   Horwitz, pp.1-83
   Frances, “Normal Grief or Depression in DSM-5” (see link above)
   Latif, “Do some cultures have their own way of going mad?” (See link)
   Guest Lecture: “Culture Bound Syndromes” (Oct. 2)

VI. Mental illness and stigma (Oct. 7)
   “Labeling” theory, stigma and identity
   a. Inequalities: Race, class and gender
   Readings:
   Link et al., “Public conceptions of mental illness.”
   Review Rosenhan and Goffman
   
   **Midterm Essay due Friday Oct. 14 in class**
   **Paper or Power point assignment given out Oct. 14**
   **One page proposals due on Nov. 6**

VII. The Experience of Mental Illness (Oct. 14)
    Kaysen, *Girl Interrupted* (read book, view film)
    Karp, “Taking anti-depressant medications:…”
    Kafka, excerpts from *The Metamorphosis* (LATTE)

VIII. Pharma and everyday life ills (Oct. 21)
    a. The age of anxiety and new wonder drugs: Miltown, Valium, Prozac
    b. The increasing pharmaceuticalization of everyday life
    Lane, “The Selling of Social Anxiety Disorder.” (LATTE)
    Herzberg, *Happy Pills*, pp. 1-150.

Film: Selling Sickness (Oct. 23)
(Read about David Healy on Wikipedia)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Healy_(psychiatrist)

IX. Three cases:
   a. Depression (Oct. 28)
      Reading: Horwitz and Wakefield, “Is there really an epidemic of depression?”
                  Herzberg, pp. 150-92
   b. ADHD (Oct. 30)
      Reading: Conrad and Potter, “From Hyperactive Children to ADHD Adults.”
                  (LATTE)
   c. Autism, Internet and Medicalization (Nov. 4)
      Reading: Two 2012 NY Times articles (LATTE)

X. The Globalization of American Psychiatry (Nov. 6)
   Reading: Watters, Crazy Like Us, pp. 1-63, 127-185, pp. 249-56..

XI. Mental Health and Human Rights (Nov. 11)
   Guest Lecture: Dr. John Sargent, Tufts Medical School
   Reading: Mental Health and Human Rights

XII. Newest directions biological psychiatry: neuroscience and genetics
   Guest Lecture: Dr. Andrew Neirenberg, MGH (Nov. 13)
   Reading: TBA

XIII. Student power point presentations (Nov. 18, 20, 25, Dec. 4, 6)

     8-10 page independent paper due Dec. 4
     Final essays will be distributed Dec. 6 and due 10 days later

Office: Pearlman 102
Email: conrad@brandeis.edu
Office hours: Tuesday 11:00-12:00, Thursday 1:00-2:00 and by appointment.

TA: Catherine Tan, ctan@brandeis.edu
Office hours: TBA

Peer Assistant: Amy Dushkin, amydushk@brandeis.edu
Office hours: TBA