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 http://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2012/01/08/some-cultures-have-their-own-ways-going-mad/fSuwCngcHzpMZdbZsfagI/story.html

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

Introduction to Class (Jan. 15)

I. History of Madness (Jan. 18 & 22)
   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 (Jan. 25)
   Readings:
   Burns, *Psychiatry*, pp. 35-53
III. Psychiatry and Social Control (Jan. 29)
   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 (Feb. 1)

IV. Triumph and failure of public mental hospitals and deinstitutionalization (Feb. 5)
   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 (Feb. 8 & 12)
   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: Beth Semel, “Culture Bound Syndromes” (Feb. 8)

VI. Mental illness and stigma (Feb. 15)
   “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 Feb. 15 in class
   Paper or Power point assignment given out Feb. 15
   One page proposals due on March 15
   [Winter Break Feb. 18-22]

VII. The Experience of Mental Illness (Feb. 26)
   Kaysen, *Girl Interrupted* (read book, view film)
   Karp, “Taking anti-depressant medications:…”
   Kafka, excerpts from *The Metamorphosis* (LATTE)

VIII. Pharma and everyday life ills (March 5)
   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 (March 12)
(Read about David Healy on Wikipedia)  
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Healy_(psychiatrist)

IX. Three cases:
   a. Depression (March 15)  
      Reading:  
      Horwitz and Wakefield, “Is there really an epidemic of depression?”  
      Herzberg, pp. 150-92
   b. ADHD (March 19)  
      Reading:  
      Conrad and Potter, “From Hyperactive Children to ADHD Adults.”  
      (LATTE)
   c. Autism, Internet and Medicalization (March 22)  
      Reading:  
      Two 2012 NY Times articles (LATTE)

X. The Globalization of American Psychiatry (April 5, April 10)  
   Reading:  
   Watters, Crazy Like Us, pp. 1-63, 127-185, pp. 249-56.

XI. Mental Health and Human Rights (April 12)  
   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 (April 16)  
   Reading: TBA

XIII. Student power point presentations (April 19, 23, 26, 30)

8-10 page independent paper due April 26
Senior final essays due May 6, others due May 13

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