Anthropology 234  
Psychocultural Studies and Medical Anthropology:  
Morality, Virtue, and Subjectivity

Instructor: Jason Throop  
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Description

It is a truism to say that ideas of what constitutes the good, the right, and the just are core orientations for the self in any given community of practice. It is also a longstanding assumption in social theory that moral ideals are deeply implicated in the formation of particular subjectivities and corresponding modes of social action. In this seminar we will explore how philosophical and psychological-medical anthropological literatures on morality, virtue, and subjectivity can further inform and generatively extend such basic assumptions in contemporary culture theory. The first half of the seminar will consist of working through a set of writings representing more or less delineated philosophical approaches to morality in addition to reading at least one corresponding work in psychological-medical anthropology that either draws directly from or is critical of such perspectives. For the remaining weeks, we will turn more exclusively to contemporary works in anthropology addressing morality and subjectivity in relation to issues of power, selfhood, violence, gender, and the ethnographic enterprise itself. In so doing, we will collectively seek to interrogate the possible ways that local moral worlds and lived experience complexly intertwine for individual social actors who often struggle to reconcile conflicts between landscapes of desire, obligation, and the good.

Requirements

(1) Leading Discussion: You will each be responsible for organizing and leading discussion for at least one of our nine meetings
(2) Weekly Reaction Papers: You will write a 1-2 page reaction paper for the readings each week.

Week 1: On the Formation of Ethical Subjectivities


**Week 2: Narrative, Subjectivity, and Virtue Ethics**


**Week 3: Sociology, Pragmatism, and Living a Moral Life**


**Week 4: Narrative, Virtue, and the Other**


Week 5: Culture, Self, and Morality


Week 6: Power, Virtue, and Subjectivity


Week 7: Violence, Morality, and Subjectivity


**Week 8: Gender and Morality**

**GUEST SPEAKER: ANGELA GARCIA (UCLA)**


**Week 9: NO MEETING DUE TO AAA’s**

**Week 10: Ethics and Anthropological Subjectivity**