ANTHROPOLOGY 135A: THE HISTORY OF
PSYCHOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Instructor: Jason Throop
Time: Monday and Wednesday, 12:30 - 1:45 pm
Room: Haines A44

Office: 374 Haines Hall
Office Hours: 10:30 am – 11:30 am on Wed, and by appointment
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Course Description

In this course we will examine the early foundations and historical development of the field of psychological anthropology. Residing at the intersection of the disciplines of psychology and anthropology, psychological anthropology can most simply be understood as that field of study that looks to investigate the ways in which subjective experience on the one hand, and cultural meaning on the other, interrelate. Some of the questions that psychological anthropologists have traditionally asked, and which we will explore together, include: How are human beings transformed into cultural beings? To what extent, and how, is our subjective experience patterned by our culture? How is social life mediated, experienced, and expressed through the body? What does it mean to be a self in a particular society and what is the relation between self and society? Is subjective experience ever exhausted by cultural forms of meaning? If not, what roles do these otherwise elided forms of subjectivity play in processes of self-articulation and social action? How are cultural meanings personalized by specific actors? How do different cultures define normalcy, deviancy and pathology?

Prerequisite

Anthropology 9 and Upper Division standing, or consent of the instructor.

Goals

(1) To introduce and historically situate key topics and debates in psychological anthropological theorizing and research.

(2) To expose you to ideas about the differential patterning of subjective experience cross-culturally so that you can begin to question explanations of human behavior that you currently take for granted in the context of your daily life.
Grading

Grading will be based on a mid-term and final take home exam.

Midterm Take Home Exam (50%): Handed out on Wednesday, February 7th at the end of class. Due at the BEGINNING of class Monday, February 12th.

Final Take Home Exam (50%): Handed out on Wednesday, March 14th at the end of class. Due in the Main Anthropology Office by 5 pm Monday March 19th

Required Texts
(May be purchased at ASUCLA bookstore)


History of Psychological Anthropology Reader (HPAR)

Course Schedule: Topics and Readings

I. Questioning Psychological Universals and Cultural Psychologies

Week 1: Introduction

Monday, January 8th, Lecture 1: Course Introduction, Immanuel Kant and his Influence


Wednesday, January 10th, Lecture 2: Neo-Kantianism and Boasian Anthropology

RPA: Prelude

Week 2: Culture and Perception

Monday, January 15th: Martin Luther King, Jr Holiday: NO CLASS

Wednesday, January 17th, Lecture 3: Rivers and the Cambridge Expedition to the Torres Straits

RPA: Chapter 1
Week 3: Psychoanalytic Anthropology and its Critics

Monday, January 22nd: Freud and Psychoanalytic Anthropology

RPA: Chapter 2


Wednesday, January 24th: Oedipus and Trobriands


II. Cultural Variations in Psychological Orientations

Week 4: Culture and Personality

Monday, January 29th: Abram Kardiner and Basic Personality

RPA: Pgs. 68-76 in Chapter 4

Wednesday, January 31: Configurationalism and the Sapirean Alternative

RPA: Chapter 3


Week 5: Language, Thought, and World View

Monday, February 5th: Sapir Continued: Sapir/Whorf Hypothesis


Wednesday, February 7th: The Self and its Behavioral Environment

RPA: Pgs. 77-83 in Chapter 4, Interlude: The Crisis of Culture and Personality


MIDTERM TAKE HOME EXAM WILL BE HANDED OUT AT THE END OF CLASS
Week 6: Kantian Categories Revisited

**Monday, February 12th: Mentalities (I): Levy-Bruhl vs. Durkheim**


**MITERM DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**

**Wednesday, February 14th: Mentalities (II): Claude Levi-Strauss**


**III. PSYCHOPATHOLOGY, LEVELS OF AWARENESS, AND ARTICULATING EXPERIENCE**

Week 7: Mentalities, Psychopathology, and Altered States of Consciousness

**Monday, February 19th: President’s Day Holiday: NO CLASS**

**Wednesday, February 21st: Questions of Deviance and Psychopathology**


RPA: Chapter 11

Week 8: Culturally Constituted Defense Mechanisms, Personal Symbols, and Person-Centered Ethnography

**Monday, February 26th: Cultural and Personal Symbols**


**Wednesday, February 28th: Hypocognition and the Anthropology of Emotion**


**Week 9: Embodiment and Levels of Awareness**

**Monday, March 5th: Levels of Awareness, Habit, and Non-Conscious Process**


**Wednesday, March 7th: Embodiment and Experience**


**Week 10: Sensorial Anthropology and Concluding Remarks**

**Monday, March 12th: Sensation Revisited**


**Wednesday, March 14th: Concluding Remarks**

**FINAL TAKE HOME EXAM HANDED OUT AT THE END OF CLASS**

**FINAL EXAM DUE MONDAY MARCH 19th**