

HLTHAGE 4Q03: Representations of Mental Illness Spring 2021

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Seminars: Synchronous on Zoom
Mondays/Wednesdays, 5:30-8pm

Office Hours: by appointment
<https://mcmaster.zoom.us/j/4578106386>

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Course Description

Increasingly, stories and experiences relating to individuals diagnosed with mental health-related problems are being recognized as fundamental to the study of mental illness. Various media – including books, television, film, newspapers, songs, and poetry, among others – are utilized to bring these stories to light. Yet personal narratives and third-party accounts do not merely “tell a story” - they may be used to re-evaluate government healthcare policy and reshape treatment regimens. These representations also play a central role in shaping popular and medical understandings of mental health and mental illness. This course asks students to examine representations of mental illness and the wider world of mental health through a variety of mediums, including film, literature, autobiography, poetry, music, diaries, and art.

Course Objectives

After the course, students should have a strong grasp on how representations of mental illness have contributed to popular ideas about mental health. Students should come to appreciate the key differences in how various social actors have depicted the issue of mental illness, including physicians, artists, and individuals diagnosed with mental illness themselves. Students should also be able to explain how representations of mental illness have been mobilized by the consumer/survivor movement to challenge the biomedical conception of mental illness.

Required Materials and Texts

- All materials are available on Avenue to Learn.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Proposal: 15% (due May 19th)
2. Essay: 45% (due June 16th)
3. Presentation: 20%
4. Weekly Participation: 20%

Course Evaluation – Details

Essay Proposal (20%)

Students are required to submit a 2 page (double-spaced) proposal relating to their final assignment. The proposal should clearly state your research question (not your thesis!) and explain why it is significant and worthy of study. The question should be grounded in pre-existing scholarly literature (at least 5 secondary sources). Answering the question – the goal of your major essay – must incorporate the study of a representation of mental illness (a primary source). Thus, your proposal should make reference to whatever primary source(s) you plan on analyzing. More details on the assignment will be shared during class.

Essay (45%)

Students are required to complete an 8-10 page, double-spaced final paper in APA format on any subject relating to representations of mental illness. For example, you might choose to focus on a specific medium or instead investigate a particular theme across different genres/media. The paper should incorporate both primary materials (the representations you will be analyzing) as well as secondary material (scholarly work on representations of mental illness). You may write on any topic of your choosing, but all topics should be cleared with the instructor well in advance.

Weekly Participation (20%)

Regular class attendance and participation are *mandatory* requirements to succeed in this course. Classes primarily take the form of a large group discussion, and students will be graded for the quality of their oral contributions. Students should aim to ground their comments in both course material and real-world experience. Although some people will naturally speak more than others, it is important that all students aim for regular contributions to the discussion. It is critical that students stay on top of the reading material in order to ensure good class discussions. In the context of Zoom, you are expected to be on time and to turn your camera on. Grades will not be given solely for attendance.

Presentation (20%)

Each student will be responsible for leading a 20-25 minute portion of class. During this time, students should provide a critical reflection upon the reading/representation of mental illness being discussed. This should NOT simply be a summary of the representation's narrative; instead, students should ground their presentation in the broader context of discussions and understandings of mental health and illness. In addition to analyzing their material, students should prepare questions for the rest of the class. Sign-up for topics begins during the first class.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Topic 1 (May 3)

Introduction to Madness, Mental Illness, and Differentiation

Topic 2 (May 5)

Visualization and Representations

Readings:

- Hacking, *Madness: Biological or Constructed?*
- Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*

Topic 3 (May 10)

Techniques of Representation

Readings:

- Shoeneman et al. “Interior Landscapes of Mental Disorder”
- Johansson & Sternudd, “Iconography of Suffering in Social Media”

Topic 4 (May 12)

News Media and Mental Illness

Media:

- Russell, “Brave and Afraid”
- Press, “Madness”
- Vice News, “Institutionalized”

Notes: Presentations begin

Topic 5 (May 17)

Personal Narratives of Mental Illness

Media:

- Tauchert, “Notes from My Psychosis”
- *Binge* TV pilot
- Dixon, “Left of Normal”

Topic 6 (May 19)

With Reference to the Medical World

Media:

- RD Laing, *Divided Self*, chapter 11
- Selected writings from Ronald Pies
- DSM-5 clinical vignettes

Notes: PROPOSALS DUE

Holiday (May 24) – no class

Topic 7 (May 26)

Fiction

Media:

- extracts from: Plath, *The Bell Jar*
- Kesey, *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest*

Topic 8 (May 31)

Non-Traditional Forms of Representation

Media:

- Mental Illness and song
- Meme collection
- Consumer goods

Topic 9 (June 2)

Mad Activism

Media:

- *Phoenix Rising*, vol 6, issue 1, 1986
- *Mad Students: This Insane Life*, issue 2, 2014
- NFB: *Mental Patients' Association* film

Topic 10 (June 7)

Advertising and Public Information

Media:

- Print ad collection
- Video ad collection
- Anti-stigmatization campaigns

Topic 11 (June 9)

Family Perspectives

Media:

- "When My Father Actually Lost His Mind"
- "Reaching My Autistic Son through Disney"
- "The Story of a Street Person"
- "My Lovely Wife"

Topic 12 (June 14)

Film

Media:

- *Black Swan*

Notes: FINAL ESSAY DUE on June 16th at 11:59pm on A2L

Course Policies

Email

Do not email the course instructor or TAs via Avenue to Learn. Direct all communication to our McMaster email addresses from your McMaster address. Questions that can be easily answered by looking at the syllabus will be ignored.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-

MARK	GRADE
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Submitting Assignments

Assignments must be submitted online to the Avenue to Learn dropbox. This copy is officially due by 11:59PM on the due date posted. Failing to submit a copy by this point will result in a late penalty. “Really getting into macramé”, “Burning banana bread”, and “Having to sign for a package” will not be accepted as reasons for late submission.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 3% per day, including weekends. These should be submitted to the Avenue to Learn dropbox.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Students using MSAFs will have to complete all assignments at a later date - the grade for missed assignments or tests will NOT be tacked onto any other assignment or test. MSAFs must be filed on the day that the assignment is due, triggering an automatic 3 day extension. Without exceptional permission granted officially by your faculty, extensions beyond 72 hours will not be given.

Avenue to Learn

Course material will be posted on Avenue to Learn. Please check the site often to keep informed of important course information or announcements.

Course Modification

The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course during the term. If any modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

University Policies

Academic Integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and

academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Courses with an On-line Element

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

Academic Accommodation of Students With Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Requests For Relief For Missed Academic Term Work

[McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

Academic Accommodation For Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Copyright And Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.