

## **Anthropology 796/Religious Studies 786**

**Fall 2016**

### **Ritual and Symbolic Healing**

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Fridays, 1:30 p.m -3:30 p.m., UH 122

This course examines ritual and symbolic healing practices in a variety of social, cultural and religious contexts and geographic locales. The course facilitates critical reflection on how social and cultural theories have been employed by anthropologists, religious studies scholars, and others to interpret diverse healing practices. Other topics addressed in the course include the construction of religious meaning through illness narratives, gender and ritual healing, and the relationships among healing, affliction, and structures of social power and domination. The course will be conducted as a seminar. Every student will be responsible for reading all the assigned weekly readings and for preparing a 5 page (typed double-spaced) discussion paper on the readings listed in the syllabus every week. This semester, the course will provide the opportunity for close reading of five innovative recent ethnographic studies dealing with health and healing, understood in a holistic sense to include both physical, mental and spiritual health. We will devote two or three weeks to each book. Weekly discussion papers should focus on each book chapter listed for that week on the syllabus. The discussion paper should summarize and critically evaluate the author's argument and formulate questions to be raised during seminar discussion. Secondary sources may be used, but the assigned course readings for the week should be the primary focus of the discussion paper. These papers are due in class each week and will be evaluated together with seminar participation as the basis for the course grade. 25% of the grade will be based on seminar participation and 75% on the weekly discussion papers. Example discussion papers will be posted on the *Avenue* site for the course.

#### **Texts**

All books are available from the *Campus Store*.

***Extraordinary Conditions: Culture and Experience in Mental Illness***, by Janis Jenkins, University of California Press, 2015.

***Recovery's Edge: An Ethnography of Mental Health Care and Moral Agency***, by Neely Laurenzo Myers, Vanderbilt University Press, 2015.

***Life Beside Itself: Imagining Care in the Canadian Arctic***, by Lisa Stevenson, University of California Press, 2014.

***Improvising Medicine: An African Oncology Ward in an Emerging Cancer Epidemic***, by Julie Livingston, Duke University Press, 2012.

***Depression in Japan: Psychiatric Cures for a Society in Distress***, by Junko Kitataka, Princeton University Press, 2011.

**Syllabus and Bibliographic Details for Weekly Readings**

- Sept. 9:           **Course Introduction**
- Sept. 16:         ***Extraordinary Conditions***: Introduction, Part One
- Sept. 23:         ***Extraordinary Conditions***: Part Two, Conclusion
- Sept. 30:         ***Recovery's Edge***: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4
- Oct. 7:            ***Recovery's Edge***: Chapters 5, 6, 7, Appendix
- Oct. 21:         ***Life Beside Itself***: Prologue, Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 3
- Oct. 28:         ***Life Beside Itself***: Chapters 4, 5, 6, Epilogue
- Nov. 4:           ***Improvising Care***: Chapters 1, 2, 3, Interlude
- Nov. 11:         ***Improvising Care***: Chapters 4, 5, 6, Epilogue
- Nov. 18:         ***Depression in Japan***: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4
- Nov. 25:         ***Depression in Japan***: Chapters 5, 6, 7
- Dec. 2:           ***Depression in Japan***: Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11