

Anthropology 309/519  
Psychoanalytic Studies (PSYS) 309/519  
Psychoanalysis and Anthropology

Tuesday  
3:00-6:00 p.m.  
Via Zoom

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Museum 518  
Office Hours: TBA

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**DESCRIPTION**

This course will introduce students to the rich literature that has grown up around the encounter between psychoanalysis and anthropology, from *Totem and Taboo*, to studies of the Oedipus complex, concepts of self and other, child-rearing practices, ritual symbolism, mythology, and dreams. The class will also look to the future, endeavoring to examine as well such issues as race and gender relations, micro-aggressions, the role of statues of historical figures in the present day, and other contemporary issues.

A unique aspect of this class is that it is co-taught by an anthropologist and a practicing psychoanalyst, giving students a rare firsthand opportunity to participate in the engagement between research and practice, as well as between theoretical paradigms. From the anthropological side, we look at how culture, as a force external to the individual, shapes internal psychic experience. From the psychoanalytic side, we look at how internal psychic processes, in turn, influence cultural patterns. We will observe and compare the different types of methods that anthropologists and psychoanalysts have used to approach these matters.

Students will be expected to engage actively in seminar discussions, and to not only master readings in psychoanalytic anthropology, but also apply what they have learned to explorations of the contemporary world. Most of the classes will be divided into an earlier part (Method and Theory) devoted to discussion of major themes and contributions to our subject, and a later part (Contemporary Interest) offering an opportunity to apply these ideas to understanding contemporary matters in our society. As part of the course requirements, students will prepare a seminar paper examining empirical materials from the perspective of psychoanalytic anthropology, and they will present the results of their research in the seminar.

The course is appropriate not only for students of anthropology or psychology, but for those interested in interpretive research in the humanities (literature, art, film) and social sciences more generally. There are no specific course prerequisites, though some prior course exposure to cultural or psychological approaches to social relations or expressive forms is desirable.

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## REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

This class focuses on core readings in method and theory at the interface between psychoanalysis and anthropology. Correspondingly, 50% of a student's grade will be based on participation in class discussions and reading response papers and follow-up comments. To maximize class interactions, we will have an *asynchronous* component of the class. Each week a pair of students will be responsible for writing and posting a short commentary (250-500 words) on some contemporary issue using the concepts and ideas from that week's class. The students may work together to produce a single paper, or they may work separately. Their paper(s) will be posted for other students to write short comments on, typically no more than one or a few sentences. Other than the paper writers, everyone is expected to comment on the paper(s) or on comments made by others. The idea is to have an online discussion.

The commentary will be posted online by 6:00 p.m. on the Friday after the readings for a particular week have been discussed in class, with comments by others due by 6 p.m. the following Monday. For example, the readings for Week 3 will be discussed in class on September 15. The response paper(s) for the week should be posted by 6:00 p.m. on Friday, September 18. Comments by other students will be due by 6:00 p.m. on Monday, September 21.

The class also endeavors to examine contemporary issues and explore possibilities for new research through employing psychoanalytic perspectives on anthropological materials and/or anthropological perspectives on psychoanalytic materials. Correspondingly, 50% of the student's grade will be based on a term paper dealing with the analysis of some contemporary social and cultural phenomenon and/or with first-hand research data.

If students have on-going research projects (for example, in connection with a thesis or dissertation), they are encouraged to work on a paper connected with that research. We will attempt to develop a class-wide research project that can nevertheless be directed at student-specific interests and needs. Some research topics we have suggested in the past are included at the end of this syllabus. Students may choose to work in groups of two or three on the research projects, or to work independently. The term paper should be approximately 4,000 words in length.

A paragraph length statement of the research problem and outline of the proposed research should be submitted during Week 6.

Students will give short presentations of the work they have done on the term papers during the last two weeks of class. Finished papers should be electronically sent to the instructors, as word documents (not pdfs), no later than Tuesday, December 15, 2020 at noon.

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### **COURSE READINGS:**

We are hoping to have all readings accessible online, either as PDFs or ebooks accessible through the Penn Library. For those who can afford them, the following books would make good additions to your library.

Milton, Jane; Caroline Polmear, and Julia Fabricius. *A Short Introduction to Psychoanalysis*. 2004.

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. James Strachey (trans.). New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc. 1961[1930].

Paul, Robert. *Moses and Civilization*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 1996.

Obeyesekere, Gananath. *Medusa's Hair*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1981.

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### **ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Due to the nature of this course, the attendance policy will be strict. Please do not take this course if you cannot commit to attending every class. You are allowed to miss one class with no impact on your grade with an excuse ahead of time. However, each subsequent class missed will result in the deduction of a full letter from your final grade. In other words, missing two classes will turn an A into a B and so forth.

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### **ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

You are reminded of the university policy on academic honesty. Do not cheat. Do not plagiarize. Do not pass off others' work or ideas as your own. Do not make up facts when doing research. Always cite *all* reference materials and sources (including

interviews) that you use. This policy applies to all papers and research projects undertaken in this course as well as elsewhere.

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## WEEK BY WEEK SCHEDULE

### Week 1: Introduction to the Psychoanalytic Perspective

September 1, 2020

Plotkin, Mark (1993). *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice*, pp. 1-5, Viking, New York.

Morrison, Toni 2004 [1987]. *Beloved*, pp. 3-7. New York: Vintage Books.

Neuropsychanalysis: Watch this brief 3 minute and 41 second video clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vqFinwWyFRk>. While our focus in the class is on the subjective side (introspection and empathy), neuropsychanalysis attempts to link the subjective to brain research.

#### *Supplementary (Not Required)*

Also, this 17 minute and 39 second Ted talk by Jaak Panksepp which gives a brief introduction to affective neuroscience:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65e2qScV\\_K8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65e2qScV_K8).

Panksepp, Jaak and Lucy Biven 2012 *The Archaeology of Mind: Neoevolutionary Origins of Human emotions*. Chapter 1: Ancestral Passions, pp. 1-46. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

#### *Some Concepts to Consider*

What is the role of fantasy in human experience?

What is the relation between fantasy and action?

### Week 2: Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Anthropology

September 8, 2020

#### *Method and Theory*

Milton, Jane; Caroline Polmear, and Julia Fabricius 2004. *A Short Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, Chapters 1-2, pp. 1-38.

Shedler, Jonathan 2010. "The efficacy of psychodynamic psychotherapy."  
*American Psychologist*, Vol. 65, No. 2, 98–109. REQUIRED PAGES 98-100 ONLY.

Blum, Lawrence 2000 manuscript. "Hating and Dominating the 'Other': Psychological Mechanisms of Prejudice and Racism, with Historical Illustrations." Conference presentation.

Turner, Victor 1973. "Symbols in Ndembu Ritual," in *The Forest of Symbols*, pp. 19-47. New York: Basic Books.

*Supplementary Reading (Not Required)*

Paul, Robert A. "Anthropology." In *The American Psychiatric Publishing Textbook of Psychoanalysis*, Ethel Spector Person, Arnold M. Cooper, and Glen O. Gabbard, eds. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2005. 479-89.

*Contemporary Interest*

Psychoanalytic treatment as a cultural phenomenon: nature of the dyadic relation; office set up; sessions; discourse interaction; duration of treatment; psychoanalysis in films

*Some Concepts to Consider*

What do the terms Dynamic Unconscious, Intra-psychic Conflict, and Transference mean? How important is child development?

Week 3: Dreams: Repression and Symbolization

September 15, 2020

*Method and Theory*

Freud, S. (1900). The method of interpreting dreams: An analysis of a Specimen Dream, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume IV (1900): The Interpretation of Dreams (First Part), pp. 96-121.

Erikson, Erik. The Dream Specimen of Psychoanalysis. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 2:5-56. (skim chart, pp. 22, 23; skip part V, pp. 27-34.)

Martin Luther King. "I Have a Dream" speech.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smEqnklfYs>. [preceded by ad,  
which can be skipped after several seconds]

*Supplementary Reading (Not Required)*

Kracke, Waud. A Language of Dreaming: Dreams of an Amazonian Insomniac.  
Int. J. Psycho-Anal., 80:257-271. 1999.

Urban, Greg, with Patricia Kent, M.D. "Rocks that talk." Chapter 7 in  
*Metaphysical Community: The Interplay of the Senses and the Intellect*,  
pp. 215-240. 1995.

*Contemporary Interest*

Dream circulation in contemporary American society.

*Some Concepts to Consider*

What are the roles of symbols in human thought, dreams, culture?

What are the roles of fantasy and of psychic conflict in dreams and in culture?

Week 4: The Self

September 22, 2020

*Method and Theory*

Wolf, Ernest. 1988. *Treating the Self: Elements of Clinical Self Psychology*.  
Chapters 1-3, pp. 3-49. New York: The Guilford Press.

Winnicott, D.W. 1971. "Transitional objects and transitional phenomena." In  
*Playing and Reality*, pp. 1-25. London: Tavistock.

Powell, Dionne 2018. "Race, African-Americans, and Psychoanalysis: Collective  
Silence in the Therapeutic Conversation." *Journal of the American  
Psychoanalytic Association* 66(6):1021-1049.

Basia Winograd, dir., [\*Black Psychoanalysts Speak\*](#) (2014): 60 minute video.

*Supplementary Reading (Not Required)*

Mauss, Marcel. "A category of the human mind: the notion of person; the notion  
of self." In *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy,  
History*. M. Carrithers, S. Collins, and S. Lukes (ed), pp. 1-25. New York:  
Cambridge University Press. 1985[1938]. This is an anthropological  
classic.

*Contemporary Interest*

Micro-aggressions. Social media.

*Some Concepts to Consider*

What is a self? How does it come to exist? Does it have boundaries?

Week 5: Psychic Structure and Human Development

September 29, 2020

*Method and Theory*

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. James Strachey (trans.). New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc. 1961[1930]. Available on the PEP Web, <http://www.pep-web.org.proxy.library.upenn.edu/document.php?id=se.021.0000a> . You will have to log in with your Penn Key.

Dr. Seuss. *The Cat in the Hat*, Random House, New York (1985) [1957].

Ingham, John (1996). *Psychological Anthropology Reconsidered*. Chapter 3: Childhood, pp. 55-87. Cambridge University Press.

*Contemporary Interest*

Recommended

Freud, Sigmund 1965[1933]. "Lecture XXXI" in *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. James Strachey (trans.), pp. 57-80. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc.

Blum, Lawrence D. "The 'all-but-the-dissertation' student and the psychology of the doctoral dissertation." *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, 24: 174-185. 2010.

*Some Concepts to Consider*

How do the individual and culture influence each other?

Might concepts of developmental phases and conflicts help understand individuals? How about cultures?

Week 6: Current research week:

October 6, 2020

Catch up on what we didn't cover; discussion of research projects

\*\*\*\*For students doing an independent research project, a paragraph length statement of the student's research plan is due. Discussion of projects\*\*\*\*

As time permits, instructors will talk about their current/recent research:

Urban & Urban: "Affect in the Circulation of Cultural Forms" — Chapter in the *Handbook of Language and Emotion*.

Blum: Psychodynamics of Postpartum Depression (clinical). Development of a self-report instrument to assess Counterdependency (empirical).

### Week 7: The Oedipus Complex and Social Structure

October 13, 2020

#### *Method and Theory*

Paul, Robert A. 2010. "Incest Avoidance: Oedipal and Preoedipal, Natural and Cultural." *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 58:6, pp. 1087-1112.

Spiro, Melford 1979. "Whatever Happened to the Id." *American Anthropologist* 81(1): 5-13.

Jonathan F. Schulz\*, Duman Bahrami-Rad, Jonathan P. Beauchamp, Joseph Henrich 2019. "The Church, intensive kinship, and global psychological variation." *Science* 366, 707. 14 pages,

#### *Contemporary Interest*

O'Connor, Frank. "My Oedipus Complex." In *My Oedipus Complex: and Other Stories*, pp. ???. New York: Penguin Books.

Frazier, Ian. "Dating Your Mom," in *Dating Your Mom*, pp.27-31. New York: Picador — Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 1986[1975].

#### *Some Concepts to Consider*

What is meant by "the Oedipus complex"? What kind of evidence is there for it? How does it relate to Levi-Strauss's article?

#### *Supplementary Reading (Not Required)*



Lévi-Strauss, Claude 1969[1949]. "The Problem of Incest." Chapter 2 in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, pp. 12-51. J.H. Bell, J.R. von Sturmer, R. Needham, trans. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode.

Fortes, Meyer 1977. "Custom and Conscience in Anthropological Perspective." *International Review of Psycho-Analysis* 4: 127-154.

## Week 8: Psychic Structure and Myth

October 20, 2020

### *Method and Theory*

Paul, Robert. *Moses and Civilization*. Give priority to Chapter 1 ("Beyond Freud's Moses," pp. 1-16), Chapter 2 ("The Primal Horde," pp. 17-36), Chapter 6 ("Death on the Nile," 93-119), Chapter 7 ("After the Death of the Primal Father," pp. 120-135), and Chapter 9 ("The Living Myth, pp. 170-192), if for some reason you cannot read the entire book. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 1996.\* NOTE: This book is available online through the Penn Library: <https://www-jstor-org.proxy.library.upenn.edu/stable/j.ctt1dszzq8>

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\*The preceding book by Paul draws heavily on the following unassigned book by Freud, listed here for interest and completeness: Freud, Sigmund. *Totem and Taboo*. James Strachey (trans.). New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc. 1950[1912]

### *Contemporary Interest*

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*. If you've read the whole book, that's terrific. If not, we will here just revisit our initial look at the work in Week 1 in light of what we've learned.

### *Some Concepts to Consider*

Is there a central narrative in Western civilization? If so, what?

Is there a relationship the primal horde and the situation of slavery in the U.S. plantation system of the pre-Civil War era.

Is the Oedipus complex traceable throughout Western history? Elsewhere?

Is it inherent in the human species? Evidence?

Week 9: The Self and Its Relational Environment: Culture and Personality  
October 27, 2020

*Method and Theory*

Erikson, Erik. "Hunters across the prairie." In *Childhood and Society*, Chapter 3, pp. 114-165. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc. Second Edition. 1963[1950].

Munroe, Robert L., Ruth H. Munroe, John W. M. Whiting "The couvade: A psychological analysis." *Ethos* 1(1): 30-74. 1973.

Basia Winograd, director, *Psychoanalysis in El Barrio* (2016). 50 minute video. Click the link to watch. You will have to login to the PEP web.

*Contemporary Interest*

Blum, Lawrence D. "Myths, Tea Parties, and American Childhood." Unpublished manuscript, 2010.

Blum, Lawrence D. "Voting for the Magic Wand, or Trump's Phallic Victory," here: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/beyond-freud/201701/voting-the-magic-wand-or-trumps-phallic-victory> or here: [http://www.philly.com/philly/opinion/20161202\\_Commentary\\_For\\_voters\\_fantasy\\_candidate\\_trumped\\_reality.html?arc404=true](http://www.philly.com/philly/opinion/20161202_Commentary_For_voters_fantasy_candidate_trumped_reality.html?arc404=true)

*Supplementary Reading (Not Required)*

Erikson, Erik. "Fishermen along a salmon river." In *Childhood and Society*, Chapter 4, pp. 166-186. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc. Second Edition. 1963[1950].

Ember, Carol R. and Melvin Ember. "Father absence and male aggression: A re-examination of the comparative evidence." *Ethos* 29(3): 296-314. 2001.

*Some Concepts to Consider*

The relational experiences of Latinx psychoanalysts.

Qualitative vs quantitative methods in anthropology and in psychoanalysis.

Is there a relation between child-rearing, culture, personality?

Do cultures have central patterns or conflicts? If so, can these be understood with developmental concepts?

Week 10: Cross-culture differences in self formation

November 3, 2020

*Method and Theory*

Rothbaum, Fred; John Weisz; Martha Post; Kazuo Miyake; and Gilda Morelli  
2000. "Attachment and Culture: Security in the United States and Japan."  
*American Psychologist* 55(10): 1093-1104.

Eng, David and Shinhee Han 2000. "A Dialogue on Racial Melancholia."  
*Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 10(4):667-700.

Main, Mary 2000. The Organized categories of infant, child, and adult attachment:  
flexible vs. inflexible attention under attachment-related stress. *Journal of  
the American Psychoanalytic Association* 48:1055-1095.

*Supplementary Reading (Not Required)*

Freud, S. (1917). "Mourning and Melancholia." *The Standard Edition of the  
Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XIV (1914-  
1916): On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on  
Metapsychology and Other Works, 237-258. [http://www.pep-  
web.org.proxy.library.upenn.edu/document.php?id=se.014.0237a#p0237](http://www.pep-web.org.proxy.library.upenn.edu/document.php?id=se.014.0237a#p0237)

Adams, Kenneth Alan (2005). "The Familial Origins of Japanese Child  
Abuse." *Journal of Psychohistory* 33(2): 157-96.

Geertz, Clifford 1973. "The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of  
Man," in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, pp . 33-54. New York: Basic  
Books.

*Contemporary Interest*

W.E.B. DuBois concept of "double consciousness."

*Some Concepts to Consider*

Does the sense of self vary between cultures?

Does the nature of relationships or attachment between people vary between  
cultures?

Methodology of the authors.

Week 11: Psychic Structure and Ritual

November 10, 2020

## A. Method and Theory

Marvin, Carolyn and Ingle, David. Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Revisiting Civil Religion. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, LXIV/4, pp. 767-780.

Obeyesekere, Gananath. *Medusa's Hair*, "Introduction" (pp. 1-11) and "Part I" (pp. 13-51). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1981.

## *Contemporary Interest*

Black Lives Matter, protests, ritual performances

### *Some Concepts to Consider*

How do cultures influence experience and expression of individual psychic conflict? How do individual psychological struggles influence culture? Is shared fantasy necessary? The role of symbols?

## Week 12: Gender

November 17, 2020

### *Method and Theory*

Herd, Gilbert H. "Sambia nosebleeding rites and male proximity to women." *Ethos* 10(3): 189-231. 1982.

Gherovici, Patricia 2018. "Anxious? Castration Is the Solution!" *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*. 38(1): 83-90.

Moore, Henrietta L. *The Subject of Anthropology: Gender, Symbolism, and Psychoanalysis*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-22, Chapters 5, pp 95-114. Malden, MA: Polity Press. 2007.

### *Supplementary Reading (Not Required)*

Gillison, Gillian (1993). "The argument among myths." In *Between Culture and Fantasy: A New Guinea Highland Mythology*, pp. 3-24. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1993

## Contemporary Interest

Gender and politics.

*Some Concepts to Consider*

Sex vs gender. Where does a sense of gender come from? How many genders are there? Roles of constitution, individual experience, culture?

Week 13: Thanksgiving Week  
November 24, 2020

NO CLASS

Week 14: Research presentations II  
December 1, 2020

Week 15: Research presentations III  
December 8, 2020

Finished papers should be sent electronically to the instructors, as word documents (not pdfs), no later than **Tuesday, December 15, 2020 at noon.**

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PRIOR SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR RESEARCH PAPERS

1. Investigate dream re-tellings and circulation among family, friends, and in dorms.
2. Analyze movies or novels from the perspective of psychoanalytic anthropology — e.g., Star Wars, Indiana Jones, Harry Potter.
3. Examine community experience of father absence, unconscious maternal identification, and misogyny, violence, and “protest masculinity.
4. Study American Anti-government movements (e.g. tea-partiers), in relation to authoritarian parenting, loyalty to (parental) authority, resentful rebellion displaced onto government. Additional related theme of counter-dependency.
5. Study usages of the word Nebbish. Yiddish has twenty (?) words for ineffectual males. Why?
6. Do ethnographic research on Christian communion or the Holy Trinity or other religious ritual phenomena.

7. Study popular understanding of the practice of psychoanalysis, possibly including movie representations.
8. Do psychiatric articles in the *New England Journal of Medicine* include asking the patient his thoughts or talking with the patient? Attempt to determine why or why not.
9. Examine Democrat versus Republican language usage and representation of unconscious emotional conflicts (especially regarding dependency and aggression).
10. Ethnographically investigate, from a psychoanalytic perspective, the relationship people have to electronic equipment, especially portable computers, iPods, and cell phones.
11. Study attitudes towards corporal punishment in relation to family of origin and politics leanings.
12. Do ethnographic/psychoanalytic research of on-line gaming (Second Life, World of Warcraft), endeavoring to comprehend the role of sex and violence for those playing the games.
13. Ethnographically examine curses in relation to culture, child development, and intrapsychic conflict.
14. Examine artifacts in the University Museum and prepare psychoanalytic interpretations of them.
15. The Human Relations Area Files provide a potential source of data for student projects, especially of the type exemplified by the Monroe et al and Ember articles in week 8.