

# Course Syllabus

[Edit](#)

## Anthropology 3090/6090 Psychoanalysis and Anthropology

Tuesdays

3:30-6:30 p.m.

Museum 419

Lawrence Blum, M.D.

2400 Chestnut Street, Suite 2810

Phone: 215-751-0102

ldb@lawrenceblum.com

Office Hours: Call or Email

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the rich literature concerning 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. 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 observe and compare the different types of methods that anthropologists and psychoanalysts have used to approach these matters.

The class also puts psychoanalytic and anthropological ideas to work in examining contemporary issues such as race and gender relations, micro-aggressions, and current political disputes. Students are expected to engage actively in seminar discussions, to master readings in psychoanalytic anthropology, and then to apply what they have learned to explorations of the world around them. 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 may be helpful.

*This course counts toward the Psychoanalytic Studies minor.*

## **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 presentations of readings to the class, as well as on written statements (formulated in a single sentence) of one key take-away point from each of the required readings; or, alternatively, one question about each reading or about an issue raised by the reading. Your key take-away sentences (only as many sentences as the number of required readings in a given week) should be uploaded by 6:00 p.m. on the Monday before the class discussion of those readings.

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. With the instructor's permission, students may choose to work in groups of two or three on the research projects, rather than working independently. In the course of their research for their projects, students are required to acquaint themselves with the pep-web (Psychoanalytic electronic Publishing, available through the Penn library system), and to make use of the literature to be found there. 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 instructor, as word documents (not pdfs), no later than Tuesday, December 19, 2022 at noon.

## **COURSE READINGS:**

We are planning 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].

Tuzin, Donald (1997). *The Cassowary's Revenge: The Life and Death of Masculinity in a New Guinea Society*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

## **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.

## **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.

## **WEEK BY WEEK SCHEDULE:**

**Week 1: Introduction to the Psychoanalytic Perspective – and to the relationship between psychoanalysis and anthropology.**

**August 30, 2022**

We will begin with a discussion of the relationship between psychoanalysis and anthropology, and then we will discuss some basics of anthropological and psychoanalytic thought and method. We will outline the plan of the course, and we will use our brief initial reading (Plotkin) to have a joint exercise in psychoanalytic thinking.

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

Cozolino, Louis (2010) "The Entangled Histories of Neurology and Psychology," pp. 1-11.

*Optional Reading:*

Panksepp, Jaak and Biven, Lucy (2012). *The Archaeology of Mind*, Chapter 1, "Ancestral Passions," pp.1-46. New York: Norton.

*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 6, 2022**

*Method and Theory*

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

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

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

Blum, Lawrence (1998). *Hating and Dominating the Other: Psychological Mechanisms of Prejudice and Racism, with Historical Illustrations*.

Optional:

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 and 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 13, 2022**

#### *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. 1954. (skim chart, pp. 22, 23; skip part V, pp. 27-34.)

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*

Martin Luther King. I Have a Dream speech. (youtube)

Dream circulation in contemporary American society. Dorms and dream narration.

#### *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: No Class?**

**September 20, 2022**

### **Week 5: The Self – Part 1**

**September 27, 2022**

#### *Method and Theory*

Winnicott, D.W. (1953). "Transitional objects and transitional phenomena." *Int. J. Psychoanal*, 53:89-97.

Powell, Dionne (2019) "Race, African Americans, and Psychoanalysis: Collective Silence in the Therapeutic Situation." *J Am Psychoanal Assn*.

Fanon, Frantz (1952/2008). *Black Skins, White Masks*, Chapter 5, "The Lived Experience of the Black Man," pp 89-119.

*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*

Are concepts of self, and of private and public self, changing? Are social media influencing concepts of self?

*Some Concepts to Consider*

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

## **Week 6: Psychic Structure and Human Development**

**October 4, 2022**

*Method and Theory*

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

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:

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 7: The Oedipus Complex and Social Structure**

**October 11, 2022**

***\*\*\*Paragraph length statement of each student's research project due. Discussion of projects\*\*\****

### *Method and Theory*

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

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

Schulz, JF, Duman, B-R, Beauchamp, JP & Henrich J. (2019). "The Church, Intensive Kinship, and Global Psychological Variation." *Science*, 366, 707 (Nov 8)

### *Contemporary Interest*

O'Connor, Frank. "My Oedipus Complex." In *My Oedipus Complex, and Other Stories*, pp.1-6. 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?

Is Cross-cousin marriage related to the Oedipus Complex or the incest taboo?

*Supplementary Reading (Not Required)*

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

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. "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. 1969[1949].

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

## **Week 8: Culture and Personality**

**October 18, 2022**

### *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.

Blum, Lawrence D. "Why Does the United States Have So Much Contempt For Its Children?" *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 31, 2022. <https://www.inquirer.com/opinion/commentary/children-america-welfare-health-education-character-20220131.html> (Links to an external site.)

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> (Links to an external site.) 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) (Links to an external site.)

### *Optional:*

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.

### *Contemporary Interest*

Culture and Personality theory applied to the contemporary United States.

### *Some Concepts to Consider*

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 9: The Self - Part 2: Cross-cultural differences in self formation**

**October 25, 2022**

*Method and Theory*

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

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

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

Video: *Black Psychoanalysts Speak*

Optional:

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

Freud, S. (1917). "Mourning and Melancholia." SE,14:237-58.

*Contemporary Interest*

Electronic equipment and the self: cell phones, iPods, laptops; Cultural controversies about race, gender, identity.

*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 10: Gender**

**November 1, 2022**

*Method and Theory*

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

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

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.

### Contemporary Interest

Sex in advertising; battles over the gender binary.

#### *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? Where does misogyny come from?

## **Week 11: The Complexity of Ethnography, Part 1**

**November 8, 2022**

### Method and Theory

Tuzin, *The Cassowary's Revenge*, pp ix-95.

Gupta, Akhil (with Jessie Stoolman), "Decolonizing U.S. Anthropology," American Anthropological Association Presidential Address, November 20, 2021. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1s21TPVjSSbTvALb60-qjFil9pUNit4bq/edit?fbclid=IwAROLaYbuLthEk6oB7t8DVBouBncTpxbzVgW3wVoZcRXIHbZNYvJzAcQHDa0#> (Links to an external site.)

### *Contemporary Interest*

Black Lives Matter; Me-Too;

What are the current US "gender wars" about?

Current Conflicts within Anthropology (and Academia)

#### *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?

What limits tolerance or acceptance? What motivates intolerance?

What determines how the past is understood?

## **Week 12: The Complexity of Ethnography, Part 2**

**November 15, 2022**

*Method and Theory*

Tuzin, *The Cassowary's Revenge*, pp 96-198.

Sacia, Jim (Illinois legislator)<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Acn-8kFZ7Gc> (Links to



[an external site.](#))

Krishnakumar, Priya (2021) This record-breaking year for anti-transgender legislation would affect minors the most. CNN, April 15, 2021. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/15/politics/anti-transgender-legislation-2021/index.html> (Links to an external site.)

Evans, Marcus (2020) Why I Resigned from Tavistock: Trans-Identified Children Need Therapy, Not Just "Affirmation" and Drugs. *Quillette*, January 17, 2020.

*Contemporary Interest*

Political Correctness and Microaggressions; Free speech and its limits.

Transgender, abortion, gun law controversies.

## **Week 13: Thanksgiving Week**

**November 22, 2020**

NO CLASS

## **Week 14: Research presentations I**

**November 29, 2022**

## Week 15: Research presentations II

December 6, 2022

### PRIOR SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR RESEARCH PAPERS

1. Analyze freedom of speech, or lack thereof, in academia, from psychoanalytic and anthropological perspectives.
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, Oathkeepers), 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. Examine Democrat versus Republican language usage and representation of unconscious emotional conflicts (especially regarding dependency and aggression).
9. Study attitudes towards corporal punishment in relation to family of origin and politics leanings.
10. 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.
11. Ethnographically examine curses in relation to culture, child development, and intra-psychic conflict.
12. Examine artifacts in the University Museum and prepare psychoanalytic interpretations of them.
13. 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.