Madness and Society in the Modern World

Part One: The Nineteenth Century
(The Enlightenment to Freud)

Subject of the Course: What is insanity? How do we define the normal and the pathological? Who in society is best suited to determine psychological health and sickness? Can there be a science of emotion and sexuality? How do class, race, religion, and gender influence our views of human mental functioning? Can the human mind know itself? At the beginning of the twenty-first-century, the sciences of the mind—psychiatry, psychoanalysis, clinical psychology, psychopharmacology, the cognitive neurosciences—claim tremendous scientific authority and exert enormous cultural influence. Yet these are only several of the urgent questions that remain controversial or unanswered today.

This seminar will seek to explore these and many related subjects. Our approach will be historical. Specifically, we will study the social, cultural, intellectual, and institutional history of madness and psychiatry in Britain, continental Europe, and North America from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. Topics will include: the origins of psychiatric humanitarianism, medical professionalization, the history of psychiatric diagnostics, the emergence of the modern asylum, patient autobiography, women in the mental health system, the history of the insanity defense in the courts, Victorian nervousness and hysteria, psychiatry and heredity, the beginnings of medical sexology, Freud and the coming of psychoanalysis, and shell shock in the First World War.

Structure of the Course: The course will meet twice weekly. On Tuesdays, we will discuss the assigned weekly reading. We will then gather on Thursdays to watch a movie dealing with the themes of Tuesday’s class. Afterwards, we will discuss the film briefly.

Course Readings: The following mandatory books are available in the university bookstore:

Krafft-Ebing, Richard von, Psychopathia Sexualis (1886).

In addition to these texts, photocopies of several week’s assigned reading are available as numbered course packets at Dup-It, which is located at 808 South Sixth Street in Champaign, and at the Reserve Desk of the Undergraduate Library.
Course Requirements: 1) attendance at and regular and informed participation in both Tuesday and Thursday classes; 2) a five-to-six-page essay on an assigned question due Friday February 27; and 3) an in-class presentation of about twenty minutes on a relevant book or article drawn from the weekly supplemental reading listed below.

Beyond these requirements, students have a choice between two options: either an analytical book report of six-to-eight pages due on at the end of the semester and a three-hour comprehensive final examination or an 18-20-page research paper, on a topic of special interest to you, due the same day as the exam.

Schedule of Classes

Class 1:
Preliminaries

Class 2:
Introduction: What is the History of Madness and Psychiatry? Why Study It?


Michel Foucault, “Madness and Culture,” in Mental Illness and Psychology (1954; 1962), Part II, 60-88. (packet #1)

Class 3:
January 29


Class 4:
The Enlightenment Origins of Modern Psychiatry

Philippe Pinel, A Treatise of Insanity (1801), Section Two. (packet #2)


Class 5:
The Madness of King George (1994), directed by Nicholas Hytner, starring Nigel Hamilton and Rupert Everett.

Class 6:
Interpreting the "Moral Treatment"


Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason (1961), chaps. 8 and 9.

Andrew Scull, Social Order/Mental Disorder: Anglo-American Psychiatry in Historical Perspective (1989), chap. 4. (packet #3)


Class 7:

Quills (2000), directed by Philip Kaufman, starring Geoffrey Rush, Kate Winslet, and Joaquin Phoenix.

Class 8:
The Social and Cultural Construction of Diagnoses: The Case of Monomania


Jan Goldstein, Console and Classify: The French Psychiatric Profession in the Nineteenth Century, chap. 5. (packet #4)


Class 9:

Equus (1977), directed by Sidney Lumet, starring Richard Burton.
Class 10:
The “Birth of the Asylum”


Class 11:


First assigned essay due

Class 12:
The Voice of the Patient: The “Mad Woman” in the Nineteenth Century


Class 13:

The Snake Pit (1948), directed by Anatole Litvak, starring Olivia de Havilland and Leo Genn.

Class 14:
Neurasthenia, or the Medicalization of Everyday Emotional Life
George Miller Beard, *A Practical Treatise on Nervous Exhaustion (Neurasthenia)* (1880), chaps. 1, 2, 5. (packet #6)


Class 15:

*The Road to Wellville* (1994), directed by Alan Parker, starring Anthony Hopkins, Matthew Broderick, John Cusack, and Dana Carvey.

Class 16:

**Legal Psychiatry and the Early Insanity Plea**


Class 17:


Class 18:

**Psychiatry and Sexuality: The Emergence of Sexology**


Class 19:


Class 20:

Psychiatry, Heredity, and Degeneration

Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero, The Criminal Woman, The Prostitute, and the Normal Woman (1893), Parts III and IV.


Class 21:

Documentary: Selling Murder: Killing Films of the Third Reich.

Class 22:

Freud and the Emergence of Psychoanalysis


Class 23:


Class 24:

Shell Shock and the First World War


Class 25:

Behind the Lines (1994), directed by Gilles MacKinnon, starring Jonathan Price and James Wilby; Let There Be Light (1946), directed by John Huston.

Class 26:

Some Conclusions: One Hundred Years of Psychiatry

Final Examination
Research Papers Due