

<http://somatosphere.net/2013/08/syllabi-on-culture-and-mental-health.html>

Syllabi on culture and mental health

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By Jeffrey G. Snodgrass

These two courses, one undergraduate and the other graduate, explore the cultural patterning of mental health and healing, of psychological flourishing and disorder. Both courses aim to help students appreciate how the cultural anthropological analysis of mental health can be enriched by (neuro)biological and psychological/ clinical perspectives. The undergraduate course has a “science and technology studies” feel to it, exploring how psychiatries, in the west and elsewhere, are in part cultural products: i.e., by examining how cultural experts and lay persons differentially “frame” and “model” mental illness and speak in culture-specific “idioms of distress.” Here, religion comes in as an engaging way to think concretely about alternate mental wellness idioms, and how they might translate, or not, into (western) psychiatry and biomedicine. The graduate course allows students to explore topics and theories by pursuing their own original research. Throughout this graduate seminar, emphasis is placed on “operationalizing” theory—that is, linking theories to specific research questions and empirical measures. Enjoy!

[Ethnopsychiatry syllabus](#)

[Culture and mental health syllabus](#)

[Jeffrey G. Snodgrass](#), *Professor of Anthropology at Colorado State University, has published widely on caste, performance, and religion in India. He is currently working on two projects. First, he is interested to understand how culture-specific absorptive experiences, achievement motivations, and social interactions contribute to virtual worlds' therapeutic and addictive dimensions. Second, in NSF-funded research, he is working to understand how loss of access to forest spaces and resources – for example, through deforestation and displacement from a newly established wildlife preserve in central India – impact indigenous peoples' health and systems of healing. He hopes empirical results from these and other projects will help him fuse insights from cultural psychiatry and neuroscience into more synthetic “biopsychocultural” accounts of mental health resilience.*

AMA citation

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