ANTH 2109
CULTURE, DISTRESS, AND PSYCHIATRIC ABNORMALITY
FALL SEMESTER 2016

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Avis Mysyk, CE237, 563-1383, avis_mysyk@cbu.ca
OFFICE HOURS: Monday (11:30 AM-2:30 PM) and Thursday (11:30 AM-1:30 PM) or by appointment
COURSE LOCATION AND TIME: B202; Tuesday and Thursday (2:30-3:45 PM)

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: In Malaysia, a female factory worker is stalked by evil spirits that live in toilet tanks. In Northern Ghana, a man is convinced that his penis has been stolen. In Northeastern Brazil, women control their strong emotions by swallowing frogs. Are these psychiatric abnormalities or are they cultural manifestations of distress? The goal of this course is to critically examine various “culture-bound syndromes” (or “cultural idioms of distress”)—such as ataques de nervios, brain-fag, and zar—as well as anorexia nervosa and their relationship, if any, to psychiatric abnormalities. Through a combination of selected readings, précis, and/or in-class presentations, students will demonstrate their understanding of the basic anthropological premise that cultural manifestations of distress do not necessarily imply psychiatric abnormality.

REQUIRED READINGS: All required readings—except Prince (1985)—are available on-line through the CBU Library website. Copies of Prince (1985) will be distributed in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Attendance/participation 20%
Précis exercise September 27 5%
Précis (3) 25% each OR
Précis (2) and in-class presentation (1) 25% each

Voluntary withdrawal deadline is November 7.

Because students will be graded on attendance and participation, they are expected to have read and to be prepared to discuss the required reading for each class.

Before writing any précis, students must complete an in-class précis exercise worth 5%. No précis will be accepted if students have not completed this exercise.

For their course requirements, students may choose among the following three options:
· either three précis; or
· two précis and one in-class presentation of a culture-bound syndrome (cultural idiom of distress).
Regardless of the combination, each course requirement is worth 25% of the final grade.

PRÉCIS: Depending on the length of the reading, a précis should be between eight and ten double-spaced, type-written pages. Each précis is due no later than one week after the reading has been covered in class. If, for example, we finish a reading on Thursday, October 6, the précis will be due no later than Thursday, October 13. Each précis must include a title page, the only page on which the student’s name and student number appears. It is highly recommended that students distribute their précis workload evenly over the course of the semester.

IN-CLASS PRESENTATION: Instead of writing a third précis, students may choose to give an in-class presentation of a culture-bound syndrome (or cultural idiom of distress). Some suggestions are latah, amok, chi no michi rootwork, pibloktoq, nervios, susto, colerina. Topics must be approved by the instructor in advance of presentations.

For consistency, all students will address the following questions (the first four questions are found in Guarnaccia and Rogler (1999)):
· what is the nature of the illness/problem?
what is the sufferer’s location in the wider social context?
what is the relationship, if any, between the illness/problem and psychiatric disorder?
what is the social and/or psychiatric history of the illness/problem?
what does treatment of the illness/problem involve?

Students may use whatever visual resources they choose, keeping in mind that such resources are meant to enhance, not to replace, a clear, well-organized, and informative presentation. Presentations should be around fifteen minutes long and allow for questions from the audience.

The following is a list of websites that will assist students in identifying and choosing a culture-bound syndrome (cultural idiom of distress) for their in-class presentation:

http://anthro.palomar.edu/medical/med_1.htm
Explanations of Illness
http://anthro.palomar.edu/medical/med_4.htm
Culture Specific Diseases
Culture-Bound Syndrome
http://mccajor.net/cbs_cul.html
Index of Culture-Bound Syndromes by Culture

NOTE:
In any written assignments, all references to others’ words and ideas, regardless of their source, must be fully referenced to avoid a charge of plagiarism (refer to CBU Academic Calendar—“Forms of Academic Dishonesty”).
Requests for time extensions on précis will be granted only for medical or compassionate reasons (such as death in the family) or for religious obligations. If a student must be absent on the day of his/her in-class presentation, other arrangements will be made. In either case, students must supply appropriate documentation (refer to CBU Academic Calendar—“Deferred Examinations”). One percent of a student’s grade will be deducted each day from any précis handed in late but not accompanied by appropriate documentation.
No précis submitted electronically will be read, printed, or graded. If students submit their précis electronically to meet due dates because of illness or inclement weather, they must submit hard-copy as soon as possible thereafter. If I am not in my office, do not slide précis under my office door. Give them to the secretary in CC248 or in B212.

Students will be expected to turn off and put away their electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, portable music devices) during class time (refer to CBU Academic Calendar—“Electronic Devices Policy”).
The Jennifer Keeping AccessAbility Centre (http://www.cbu.ca/jkac) accommodates students with disabilities.

GRADE SCALE:
A+ 90-100  C  60-69
A  85-89  D  50-59
A- 80-84  F  0-49
B  70-79
# TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

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<td>Guarnaccia and Rogler, “Research on Culture-Bound Syndromes: New Directions”</td>
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<td>Nichter, “Idioms of Distress: A Case Study from South India”</td>
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<td>Prince, “The Concept of Culture-Bound Syndromes: Anorexia Nervosa and Brain-Fag”</td>
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<td>Mather, “Accusations of Genital Theft: A Case from Northern Ghana”</td>
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READINGS
(in the order in which they will be covered)


**ASIA**


**AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST**


**THE AMERICAS**


Gone, Joseph P. 2007. "We Never was Happy Living Like a Whiteman": Mental Health Disparities and the Postcolonial Predicament in American Indian Communities. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 40:290-300.
WRITING A PRÉCIS*

A précis is an “exact replica in miniature” of an entire article which you summarize in your own words. It is NOT your interpretation OR your opinion of the article (the latter would be a critical précis). Here are some guidelines for writing a précis:

· Read the article carefully several times so that you understand it.

· Identify the article’s purpose(s) and argument and write a summary statement of them.

· Read the examples to see how they fulfill the article’s purpose(s) and support its argument, but DO NOT INCLUDE LENGTHY DESCRIPTIONS OF THE EXAMPLES in your précis.

· Write the précis (summary) by presenting the logical progression (the development) of the article as clearly and concisely as possible.

· Reduce the article to approximately one-quarter of its original length, OMITTING NOTHING from the essential argument.

· DO NOT COPY A SINGLE SENTENCE FROM THE ARTICLE. You may cite key words or phrases ONLY if they are unique or academically specific. Direct citations MUST be in “quotation marks” and include a reference to author, year, and page, e.g., (Mather 2005:37). Apart from key words or phrases, you must use your OWN words, NOT the author’s, when you write a précis.

PLAGIARISM IS UNACCEPTABLE (refer to CBU Academic Calendar—“Forms of Academic Dishonesty”).

*Adapted from: http://lonestar.texas.net/mseifert/precis1302.html.