Anthropology 329/529; PSYS 329
Psychoanalytic and Anthropological Perspectives on Childhood
Spring, 2016

Tuesday
3:00-6:00 p.m.
Classroom: Museum 330

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DESCRIPTION

This course will consider the complex interactions of nature and nurture, culture and individual psychology, and personal and group history from birth to early adulthood. We will examine and discuss phases of human development described by contemporary psychoanalysis, anthropological investigations and ethnographic descriptions of childhood from around the world, and expressions of culture and individual psychology such as folktales and rituals. We will consider questions such as: How do people become who they are, both similar to others and uniquely individual? What biological and historical factors contribute to the cultural and psychological mix? How do we develop emotionally, as individuals and as members of cultural groups? How does culture, as an influence seemingly external to the individual, shape internal psychic experience, and how do internal psychic processes affect culture? How do cultural variations get transmitted from generation to generation? What features of development, child rearing, and family structure and function are and are not universal for our species? What is and is not known about these questions?

It has recently been observed that most psychological data and theory are “WEIRD,” that is, derived from populations that are Western, Educated, Industrial, Rich, and Democratic. We will be particularly interested in what cross-cultural data bring to how we understand childhood, selfhood, developmental phases, developmental conflicts, ourselves and others.

There are no specific course prerequisites apart from curiosity about the human mind and human relationships. The course is appropriate for students of anthropology and psychology, and it may also complement studies in a great many areas of the social sciences and humanities. The class will emphasize critical thinking, careful writing, and thoughtful discussion concerning the great variety of human experience. Students will be expected to actively engage in class discussions and to consider the application of ideas from class to realms beyond the classroom. Students will prepare a final paper extending from ideas covered in the course and will present their research,
individually or in groups, to the class at the end of the semester. Some ideas for potential projects are listed at the end of this syllabus.

This class will count toward the minor in psychoanalytic studies. It will be one of very few (if any other) college classes in the country with a specifically psychoanalytic approach to understanding childhood.

The instructors are both psychoanalysts. One (LDB) is a psychiatrist with a private practice of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis for adolescents and adults. One (BSS) was trained as a pediatrician and has a private practice of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis for children, adolescents, and adults. When relevant, they will add a clinical perspective to the discussion of topics covered in class.

**REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

This seminar is a participatory examination of key ideas central to psychoanalytic and anthropological understanding of children and childhood. Correspondingly, 50% of a student's grade will be based on a combination of participation in class discussions (30%) and on written statements (formulated in a single sentence) of one key take-away point from each of the required readings (20%). 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. Monday before the class discussion of those readings. These sentences will facilitate class discussion. The instructors will provide preliminary comments to the students about the quality of their participation and sentences in Week 6.

The class also endeavors to help students expand their perspectives beyond the class materials. Thus, 50% of the student's grade will be based on a presentation (10%) and term paper (40%) applying psychoanalytic and anthropological ideas to study an aspect of childhood beyond or apart from what is covered in class. This may be library research, but first-hand collection of research data is encouraged. Students should work in groups of two or three on the research projects, or, with the permission of the instructors, 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 receive comments about the proposals at that time.

Students will give short presentations of the work they have done on the term papers during the last two weeks of class. Discussion of the presentations will allow the students to incorporate any amendments or alterations they wish into their final papers. Finished papers should be electronically sent to the instructors no later than Friday, May 6, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.

**COURSE READINGS:**
Three books will be available for purchase at the Penn Bookstore. These will also be placed on reserve at the University Museum Library, located on the 3rd floor of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. All other reading materials are in PDF form, and can be accessed through the course website. The books are:


Mead, Margaret (1928). *Coming of Age in Samoa*. New York: William Morrow


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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 may lead to the deduction of a full letter from your final grade. In other words, missing two classes can 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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**Class 1 - January 19, 2016**

**INTRODUCTION**

Why study childhood?
What is a psychoanalytic perspective?
Why a cross-cultural perspective?
How do we become who we are?
Reading:

Optional Video: The movie “Babies”

Matters for Discussion:
Understand psychoanalytic and anthropological perspectives.
Introduction to infant, child, and adolescent development.
Introduction to each other. What cultural and microcultural backgrounds might we bring with us to class?

Class 2 – Jan 26 Global View of Child Development

Reading:

Optional Reading:
Lancy, ibid, Chapter 1, pp 1-23, and Chapter 3, pp 76-111.

Presentation by Dr. Shapiro: Orientation to Understanding Human Development.

Matters for Discussion:
How are children viewed around the world?
What factors influence how children are viewed?
What qualities do parents and cultures attribute to children?
Is there an expectable arc to human development?
How consistent is such an arc around the world?
What are the first steps in becoming a person and a member of a culture?

Class 3 – Feb 2 First Year of Life, Part I - Becoming a Person, a Self, a Self-in-Relation.

Reading:
Slide presentation by Dr. Shapiro.
Video:
  Tronick still face paradigm and mother-baby interaction videos.

Matters for Discussion:
  How similar or different are infants’ and families’ experiences around the world?
  How significant are the similarities or differences for what it comes to mean to be a person?
  How is the sense of self defined and experienced in relation to others?
  How does the sense of reality develop?
  “His Majesty the baby” and human imperiousness.

Class 4 - Feb 9  
First Year of Life, Part II – Attachment around the World

Note: First class review of paper/project ideas today.

Reading:

Optional Reading:
  McKenna, James J. (2000). “Cultural Influences on Infant and Childhood Sleep Biology, and the Science that Studies It: Toward a More Inclusive Paradigm,” in Sleep and
Slide Presentation by Dr. Shapiro

Matters for Discussion:
- What do cross-cultural data show about attachment?
- How do cultural attachment styles influence emotional development and communication?
- How are love, anger, autonomy, and interconnectedness handled in different cultures?
- How do infant and child sleep arrangements vary across cultures, and what can we learn from the variations?

Class 5 - Feb 16    Toddlerhood, Part I – Separation-Individuation, Affect Development

Readings:

Optional Reading:

Slide Presentation by Dr. Shapiro

Matters for Discussion:
- To what extent do psychoanalytic ideas about early development help us understand the ethnological record?
- How much are psychoanalytic ideas of early development culturally determined?
- How do varying cultural emphases on shame, guilt, and fear affect the individual?

Class 6 - Feb 23    Toddlerhood and beyond, Part II - Absorbing the Culture
Note: Written Plan for your paper/project due today.

Readings:

Optional Reading:

Video: Mead in Indonesia and PNG
Slide Presentation by Dr. Shapiro.

Matters for Discussion:
How do parent-child interactions affect the individual?
How does an individual’s early experience affect her/his approach to parenting?
What are the psychological and cultural implications of feeding and food sharing methods?

Class 7 - March 1 Traingular/Oedipal Phase Patterns – Male

Readings:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinship_terminology (read the descriptions of the six listed types of kinship terminology and examine the chart).
Optional reading:

Clinical examples provided by instructors.
Literary References: Sophocles (Oedipus), Shakespeare (Hamlet).

Matters for Discussion:
- What is the / are some of the (male version/s of) the Oedipus complex?
- What do the terms “positive” and “negative” oedipal dynamics mean?
- How is the Oedipus complex related to the incest taboo?
- How and why do different cultures emphasize different forms of the Oedipus complex?
- What do the different forms mean for the individual? For the culture?

**March 8   Spring Break – No Class**

**Class 8 - March 15   Triangular (aka Oedipal) Phase Patterns – Female**

Readings:

Grimm JL and Grimm WC (1812). Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, in *Grimm’s Fairy Tales*. [http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0709.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0709.html)
Grimm JL and Grimm WC (1812 and 1819) Cinderella: [http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm021.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm021.html)

Optional Readings:
Clinical Examples provided by instructors.
Video: www.appi.org/Gilmore - Click on Video #5: 4 Year Old Girl

Matters for Discussion:
Different cultural influences on female oedipal patterns.
The role of kinship systems in oedipal configurations.
The role of siblings in oedipal patterns.

Class 9 - March 22 Middle Childhood, Latency

Readings:
Twain, Mark (1874). The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Chapter 7.

Optional Reading:
Whiting, JWM (1941) Becoming a Kwoma (1941), chapter 4, Childhood, pp 38-64.

Matters for Discussion:
Why does formal education start in the same age range across cultures?
To what extent does “Latency” exist cross-culturally?
What is children’s culture?
What are “cooties” and why do they continue in children’s culture?
What happens to sex and aggression in middle childhood?
Education versus Identification as a means of cultural transmission.

Class 10 - March 29 Coming of Age – Male

Readings:
Anonymous (2013). Penn Fraternity Initiation rituals
Matters for Discussion:
Similar questions as for Class 10, above. Also:
What are the meanings of circumcision, scarification, and other blood-letting rituals?
What is necessary for a sense of masculinity?
Is masculinity more contested or tenuous than femininity?

Class 11 – April 5  Coming of Age – Female

Reading:

Optional Reading:
If you have the chance, read the entirety of Mead’s Coming of Age in Samoa, a classic of anthropology.

Matters for Discussion:
What are the psychological and cultural effects and meanings of puberty?
How are earlier developmental phases (e.g., separation-individuation, oedipal) reworked in adolescence?
Are there rituals that help with psychological and social adjustment?
How is the body treated?
How is burgeoning female sexuality treated by females and males in the culture?
What provisions are there to help with the transition to parenthood?

Class 12 - April 12  Interaction of Culture and Personality: Sex, Gender, and Aggression Through the Lifecycle

Readings:
Kakar, Sudhir (1978), The Inner World: A Psychoanalytic Study of Childhood and Society in India, Oxford University Press. (Focus on Chapters 3 and 4.)
Matters for Discussion:
   All of the ideas in this course!
   How fixed or malleable are the results of developmental processes?

Class 13 – April 19  Student Presentations

Class 14 - April 26  Student Presentations

Potential Project Ideas:

Infant Directed Speech; which societies don’t; correlations with culture; developmental consequences?

Oedipal picture with son valued over father: Kakar’s India, Shtetl Jews, other? Cultural picture?

Latency – To what extent does it exist cross-culturally?

Lullaby lyrics cross-culturally – to what extent are they hostile? Where? Why?

Literature on daycare vs Momcare?

Cultural and Psychological factors in Corporal Punishment.

Cultural and Psychological aspects of pediatric/medical approaches to Bed-wetting.

Cultural and Psychological aspects of pediatric/medical approaches to feeding.

Psychological and (sub)cultural aspects of attitudes toward breast-feeding in the US/Philadelphia.

Childrearing variations among ethnic subcultures in Philadelphia.

Female genital cutting: cross cultural understanding.

Cross-cultural / psychological aspects to pediatric and medical management of hyperactivity.

Observational study of children with their caregivers, or children at play.

Anne Fadiman’s The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down (1998): A critical reading and implications for health care professionals.