SYLLABUS:

SELF, PSYCHOPATHOLOGY, AND THE MODERN AGE

= SPMAge; course #: 18:820:560:01 (also in Comp Lit: 16:195:519:01)

Instructor: Louis Sass (lsass@rutgers.edu)

Spring 2023
(tentative: some adjustments will be made.
Last worked on Jan 11, 2023)

Rutgers University: Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP)
& Program in Comparative Literature
(Meeting time to be determined.)

Summary:
“Self, Psychopathology, and the Modern Age” provides an introduction to phenomenology, hermeneutics, and aspects of modernism, postmodernist theory, and psychoanalysis through a study of selfhood, subjectivity, and self-consciousness. The course offers a comparative, psychologically oriented analysis of experience and expression in certain psychological conditions (mainly schizoid and schizophrenic) and in modernist and postmodernist culture (especially literature). Students from clinical psychology (or other mental-health professions, including social work) as well as from literature and other humanities-oriented fields are encouraged to attend. The seminar will include both lecturing and discussion. (See Appendix for longer description of course.)

Learning outcomes: Students are expected to acquire knowledge about two domains: 1, the psychopathology of schizophrenia-spectrum conditions (with a focus on phenomenological approaches) and 2, aspects of 20th century culture, primarily art, literature, and philosophy, from a largely psychological standpoint. They will develop familiarity with phenomenological, hermeneutic, as well as certain psychoanalytical approaches to the understanding of human experience and expression.

Note: Some readings listed below are only recommended, or suggested as background. ALSO: the readings below may be trimmed back.

Note: See # for items on which students may be asked to offer a brief presentation.

CLASS #1: INTRODUCTION TO COURSE: ANTONIN ARTAUD, MADNESS, AND THE AVANT-GARDE

In class: Overview of the course. Introduction to Antonin Artaud (influential avant-garde writer who suffered from schizophrenia), a key figure at crossroads of madness and modernism/postmodernism.

Hear excerpts from audiotape of Artaud radio-play, “Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu.”


Readings:

Please bring the following three items to class:

Breton, On Artaud (1 page)
Artaud, “To Have Done with the Judgment of God” (English translation: http://www.surrealism-plays.com/Artaud.html)
Sass, “Catastrophes of Heaven” lecture—quotes

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**CLASS #2: NIETZSCHE AND FOCAULT ON RATIONALITY AND MADNESS**

*In class*: Finish re Artaud. Discuss Nietzsche and Foucault.

*Lecture*: “Intro to Foucault, especially on history of madness.”

*Watch*: YouTube interview with Michel Foucault, 1971 (16 minutes approx.): www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzoOhhh4aJg (or other video re Foucault)

*Readings*:


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**CLASS #3: PHENOMENOLOGY OF SCHIZOPHRENIA SPECTRUM, I**

*In class*: Introductory information re schizophrenia. Focus on the phenomenological perspective (Minkowski, Blankenburg, Kimura; ipseity-disturbance model).

*Lecture*: Sass re introduction to phenomenology of schizophrenia, with modernist analogues (“Anxiety and Insight”: ??).

*Readings*:


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**CLASS #4: PHENOMENOLOGY OF SCHIZOPHRENIA SPECTRUM, II**

In class:

DVD: DSM-IV interviews of patient (mathematician) by Dr. Nancy Andreasen

Readings:

Foucault, Mental illness and existence, ch 4 in Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology* (see above).

Störring, G., Perplexity, in Cutting & Shepherd (Eds.), *Clinical Roots of Schizophrenia Concept* (see above), pp. 79-82.


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**CLASS #5: MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM**


Readings:


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**CLASS #6: COGNITIVE SLIPPAGE AND RELATIVISM (in Madness & in Modernism/Postmodernism)**

In class: read Robert Walser, “The Street”

Brief lecture: more re Wolfgang Blankenburg and Loss of Natural Self-Evidence.

Introduce Nietzsche “Truth and lies” essay.

Reading:


Review: Störring, Perplexity (already read; see above)

Start reading for next class.

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**CLASS #7: DISTURBANCES OF DISTANCE; LANGUAGES OF INWARDNESS**  
**IN MADNESS & MOD/P.MOD**

**In class:**

Discuss Robbe-Grillet essays, including a summary of “Nature, humanism, tragedy” (a rec. reading).

Discuss Heidegger essay re metaphysics.

Hear: Use Andreasen interview with thought-disordered pt

**Readings:** to be selected from the following:


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**CLASS #8: LOSS OF SELF IN MODERNISM AND MADNESS**

**Lecture:** Sass presents “Languages of Inwardness”.

**Reading:**


Background: Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, excerpts in *Foucault Reader* (see above), pp. 170-178 (The body of the condemned), 214-224 (Complete and austere institutions).

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**CLASS #9: DELUSION, SOLIPSISM, AND THE SUBLIME**

**Lecture:**
Sass presents: finish re Languages of Inwardness (re “autonomization”), then summary of loss of self in schizophrenia (“ipseity”-disturbance view). Also re delusion and double bookkeeping. PROBABLY OMIT: Emotional paradox in sz, with “Adolf Wolfli, Spatiality, and the Sublime.”

Reading:

Sass, MM, Ch 9: Morbid Dreamer, pp 268-299.#
Sass, MM, Ch 10: World Catastrophe 300-323 (discusses two works of fiction: Casares, “Invention of Morel,” and Kafka “Description of a struggle”)
Heidegger, Age of the world picture, in Heidegger (1977), The Question concerning Technology and Other Essays, NY: Harper and Row, pp. 115-54 (read pp 126-134, 142; the rest is only suggested, and will probably be rather confusing)

CLASS #10: PARADOXES OF THE REFLEXIVE
See: Velasquez “Las Meninas” (including Foucault’s analysis in OT). #

Readings:

Sass, L. (2009), Foucault and Modern Self Reflection, Les Temps Modernes, 656, 99-143
Sass, MM, Ch 11: Conclusion: Paradoxes of the Reflexive (somewhat overlaps the previous article)
Rec: Foucault, Order of Things (see above), excerpts: chap 2, section I; chap 3, sec I and II; chap 9, sec II, IV, V, VIII
Note: no new reading for next time; only review some previous items.

CLASS #11: FILMS (excerpts only): “LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD” AND “MELANCHOLIA”
{# = presentation re Marienbad by student ; # = presentation re Melancholia by student; in both cases consider also in light of Sass&Pienkos 2013, see below.}
In class: View parts of the films by Alain Resnais and Alain Robbe-Grillet and by Lars von Trier (possibly watch Melancholia on your own—to be decided); discuss; compare: schizophrenia vs psychotic depression?
Student presentations re each film
Reading:
Review the following: Kafka, “Description of a Struggle”; Robbe-Grillet essays; description of Casares’ “Invention of Morel” in MM pp. 305-310.

CLASS #12: POSTMODERNISM AND POSTMODERNITY, PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS
Lecture: ??“‘Hyped on Clarity’: Diane Arbus, Photography, and the Postmodern Condition.”
In class: Discussion of Jameson’s essay, beginning this class.
Reading:
Heidegger, excerpt from The Origin of the Work of Art, in Basic Writings (see above), pp. 157-165 (= an excerpt from essay, which is from pp. 139-212 (re Van Gogh’s peasant shoes painting).

CLASS #13: PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS CONTINUED; BEGIN ZIZEK/LACAN
In class: Finish (if necessary) discussion of Jameson’s essay. Begin discussion of Zizek and Lacanian perspective
??: Paper topics presented, perhaps
Reading:


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**CLASS # 14: LACAN: THE MIND OF THE MODERNIST**

In class: Sass lecture re Lacan as modernist

Reading:

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**CLASS #15: FINAL CLASS: TO BE DECIDED; CONTINUE LACAN AND MODERNISM POSSIBLY; Paper topics presented perhaps.**

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Course requirements include:

Choose to write either:
- Term paper: 10-12 pages (= recommended length)
- Or, if you prefer:
  - Take-home exam (a selection of questions to be provided)

**DUE ONE WEEK AFTER FINAL CLASS, BY MIDNIGHT.**

Also, 1 or 2 times during the semester, each student will present a reading or a reaction to a reading; to be assigned.

Also, of course: attend class, do the reading, participate in class discussion.

**STATEMENTS ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND DISABILITIES**

**Rutgers Statement on Academic Integrity:**
[https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/current.pdf](https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/current.pdf)

**Rutgers Statement on Disabilities:**
Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations,
a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/getting-registered

APPENDIX: COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
The course is interdisciplinary in nature. It will place phenomenology, hermeneutics, and some forms of psychoanalysis in historical and philosophical perspective, and present the relevance of these perspectives for understanding aspects of both psychopathology and culture. Readings will include essays or brief-excerpts from a number of influential authors from psychology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and philosophy, including the psychiatrists Karl Jaspers and R.D. Laing, the psychoanalysts Jacques Lacan and Slavoj Zizek, and the philosophers Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre. A number of chapters from L. Sass, Madness and Modernism: Insanity in Light of Modern Art, Literature, and Thought (orig 1992, revised edition 2017, Oxford University Press) will be read. We will probably view and discuss one or more films that evoke the lived worlds of psychosis (e.g., “Last Year at Marienbad” 1961, “Melancholia” 2011).

ONLINE COURSE DESCRIPTION - An interpretive or hermeneutic perspective on psychological aspects of modern culture, society, and personality. Focuses on various forms of psychopathology: especially schizoid and schizophrenic conditions, mania, and melancholia or severe depression, and on exemplary expressions of modernist and postmodernist culture—each used to shed light on the nature of the self and subjectivity in the modern era. Provides an introduction to hermeneutics, phenomenology, cultural psychology, and Lacanian psychoanalysis as alternative approaches to an understanding of personality and psychopathology.