

FIRST YEAR SEMINAR 105: STAYING SANE IN A CRAZY WORLD
FALL SEMESTER, 2012
KAREN SUTTON, 211 Severance
karen.sutton@oberlin.edu Ext 5-8364

Course description

Psychologists study the impact of trauma and tragedy on the individual in an attempt to understand how physical and mental health are (or are not) compromised by negative life events. Recently, psychologists have turned their attention to how we are affected by the global upheavals that grab headlines and keep us awake at night. An interesting but confusing picture of human functioning is emerging: some people suffer when beset by tragedy, some seem to be unaffected while still others appear to flourish in response to trauma.

In this seminar, we will investigate how human beings cope with and even flourish when faced with events of catastrophic proportions. We will approach these issues through reading and discussion of memoirs, fiction, newspaper and popular reports, and scientific studies.

Course objectives

1. To expand students' awareness of global life challenges
2. To appreciate both individual uniqueness and commonalities in human functioning
3. To integrate personal experience with psychological phenomena
4. To extrapolate from personal experience to the scientific study of behavior
5. To develop and present logical arguments and sound methods for investigating human responses to trauma

Course requirements

Attendance and advance preparation are required for all classes. Since the objectives of a first year seminar demand an interactive classroom, every member of class is expected to contribute to discussion. Many of the assigned readings are available on the course website. However, you will need to buy several books (available at the College Bookstore or obtain them on your own).

You are required to complete several written assignments including short responses and reflections (ungraded) and three papers (3-5 pages each, graded) and do a class presentation. Due dates for assignments are indicated on the course schedule (below). Details for assignments are discussed in separate documents on the course website. For many of the assignments, we will rotate responsibility for posting questions to which you will write responses. The procedure will be discussed in class. Also, we will rotate responsibility for obtaining and scheduling the movies, procedure to be discussed in class.

Course schedule

A dated syllabus follows. Think of the schedule as a guide rather than as a hard-and-fast calendar. If class discussion takes an unexpected turn, we may go with the discussion rather than the schedule. Changes in due dates will be announced in class and posted on the course website.

Grading procedures

Grading will be the A-F format. You will be graded on your journal, 3 papers, your class presentation and class participation. These will contribute to your grade as follows:

Short written responses (graded as completed or not): 15%

Each of three papers: 20%

Presentation: 15%

Class participation: 10%

Because of the interactive and interdependent nature of many assignments, late papers are strongly discouraged. We all need to be on the same page to have a good discussion. If you are on an intercollegiate team or have another reason why you will need to miss a class or be late with an assignment, let me know. If you need accommodations because of a disability, please consult the appropriate office in Peters Hall to discuss arrangements.

The Oberlin College Honor Code

Oberlin College has a student-governed honor system and every assignment is covered by the honor code. If you are uncertain how the honor code applies to a particular assignment, ask your question in class so your classmates and I can learn from the discussion.

A final word

I am looking forward to working with you; first year seminars are fun to teach (and should be fun to take!). You can contact me via email with one note of caution: Email sent after Friday late afternoon is not likely to be answered until Monday morning. In addition to reaching me by email, I have office hours on Monday from 1:30 to 3:00 in 212 Severance.

FYSP 105: Staying Sane in a Crazy World
READING LIST

If not otherwise indicated, the following will be posted on the course website on Blackboard under 'Course Documents'

Beah, I. (2007). *A Long Way Gone*. Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux: New York, New York. **(BUY)**

Camil, S. (1989). Undercover Agents' War on Vietnam Veterans. In Schultz, B. & Schultz, R. (Eds.). *It Did Happen Here: Recollections of Political Repression in America*, U of Cal Press, Berkeley.

Demick, B. (2009). *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*. Spiegel & Grau, Random House: New York, New York.

Drakulic, S. (1992). *How we survived Communism and even laughed*. Norton: New York, New York.

Dickson, F. (2009). *Children of the changing south*. McFarland & Co.: Jefferson, North Carolina.

Erikson, E. (1968). The Epigenesis of Identity. In *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, Norton: New York, New York.

Fountas, A. (2005). *Waking up American*. Seal Press: Emeryville, CA.

Hall, M. & Jones, C. (2011). *Dear Bully*. HarperCollins: New York, New York.

Keyes, C. (2005). Mental illness and/or mental health? *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 73, 539-548.

Luke, E. & Karashima, D. (2012). *March was made of yarn*. Vintage Books: New York, New York.

Marlantes, K. (2011). *What it is like to go to war*. Grove Atlantic Press: New York, New York. **(BUY)**

McDew, C. (1989). "Thou Shall Not Resist." In Schultz, B. & Schultz, R. (Eds.). *It Did Happen Here: Recollections of Political Repression in America*, U of Cal Press, Berkeley.

Nafasi, A. (2003). *Reading Lolita in Teheran: A memoir in books*. Random House: New York, New York. **(BUY)**

Pearlman, W. (2003). *Occupied Voices: Stories of Everyday Life from the Second Intifada*. Thunder Mouth Press/Nation Books: New York, New York.

Satrapi, M. (2003). *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*. Pantheon Books of Random House: New York, New York. **(BUY)**

Savage, D. & Miller, T. (2011). *It gets better*. Dutton: New York, New York.

Wiemer, L. & Katz, B. (2005). *Waiting for Peace: How Israelis Live with Terrorism*. Gefen Books: Lynbrook, New York.

Yasui, M. (1989). "In Defense of the Constitution." In Schultz, B. & Schultz, R. (Eds.). *It Did Happen Here: Recollections of Political Repression in America*, U of Cal Press, Berkeley.

(A group of articles written by psychologists and laypeople will be posted to introduce the final paper)

The following can be obtained at the circulation desk at Mudd

"Europa, Europa" (videorecording). Worldfilms, 2003.

"Catch-22" (videorecording). Filmways Production, Paramount Films. 1970 original release date.

"Hotel Rwanda" (videorecording). MGM Films, 2005 original release date.

"One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" (videorecording). Fantasy Films, Milos Forman Film, 1975 original release date.

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DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT DUE
Sep 4	Introduction to the course	
Sep 6	What do we mean by 'crazy' and 'sane'?	Watch: <i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i> Read: Keyes article
Identity Interrupted		
Sep 11	Growing up in a crazy world	Read: Beah, <i>A Long Way Gone</i>
Sep 13	Growing up in a crazy world	Read: Satrapi, <i>Persepolis</i>
Sep 18	No class, religious holiday	Finish reading Watch: <i>Europa. Europa</i>
Sep 20	Growing up in a crazy world	Read: Erikson, <i>Epigenesis of identity</i>
Sep 25	Living under Political Repression	Read: Nafisi, <i>Reading Lolita in Teheran...</i>
Sep 27	Living under Political Repression	Read: Demick, <i>Nothing to Envy</i> First paper due
Oct 2	Living under Political Repression	Read: Drakulic, <i>How we survived Communism and laughed...</i>
Oct 4	Living under Political Repression	Read: Schultz & Schultz, <i>It couldn't happen here</i>
Oct 9	Living with Social Oppression	Read: Savage & Miller, <i>It gets better</i> Read: Fountas, <i>Waking up American</i>
Oct 11	Living with Social Oppression	Read: Hall & Jones, <i>Dear Bully</i> Read: Dickson, <i>Children of the changing south</i>
Oct 16	Presentations	Presentations due
Oct 18	Presentation	Presentations due
Fall Break		
War can make you crazy		
Oct 30	Soldiers' experience: Who's crazy?	Watch: <i>Catch 22</i>
Nov 1	Soldiers' experience: Is this war crazy?	Read: <i>What it is like to go to war</i>
Nov 6	Civilians' experience: When your neighbors become your enemies	Watch: <i>Hotel Rwanda</i>
Nov 8	Civilians' experience: When your enemies become your neighbors	Read: Weimer & Katz, <i>Waiting for Peace</i> Read: Pearlman, <i>Occupied Voices</i>

How did the Islamic Revolution exert so much power and influence over so many people, including many educated and middle class people like Satrapi's parents? Was it the right decision for Marji's parents to send her off to Austria, while not choosing to escape themselves, and knowing that she is only 14 years old in a foreign country?

Punk fashion and culture was so important to Marjane that she was willing to use the black market to get it.

What's something you would have a hard time giving up, even if you knew it could get you arrested?