

# Studies in Philosophy of Mind: Minds, Mental Illness, and the Curious Case of Culture-bound Syndromes

Philosophy 535 – Spring Term 2016  
KU Leuven (actually) and Purdue University (virtually)  
Instructors:  
Andreas De Block and Daniel Kelly

## 1. Course Description

This course will focus on the nature and significance of so-called culture bound syndromes: psychiatric disorders that only exist, or are only recognized as diseases, within a particular culture. Well-known examples of such culture bound syndromes include latah, amok, koro, and closer to home, the Truman Show delusion, but other candidates that might fit the description (or once did fit the description) include fugue, multiple personality disorder, and even anorexia nervosa. We will explore what these culture bound syndromes are and what distinguishes them from other psychiatric illnesses. Doing so will require us to take up other philosophically interesting topics as well, including issues related to natural kinds and social kinds, realism and social constructivism, what mental illness and delusion might tell us the structure of the mind and existence of human universals, if and when it may be justified to compel people to submit to psychiatric treatment, and the status of both anthropology and psychiatry as sciences.

## 2. Class Meetings

Logistically, this course will be an experiment in online distance learning and teleconferencing. The two instructors, along with the graduate student participants at KU, will be in Leuven. The lectures/discussions that take place there will be recorded and posted online (details TBD). Students enrolled at Purdue will be able to watch those lectures/discussions at their own convenience.

Class will “meet” at Purdue on Monday, 9:00-11:20 pm, in Room STEW G52 in the lower level of the Stewart Center. This is an AV equipped room with microphones and big screens, and I will Skype in for these sessions. These will be informal conversation of the reading material, questions about the Leuven lectures, and anything else that needs to be discussed.

## 3. Office Hours and Contact Information

Daniel Kelly

Office: 7126 Beering Hall

Office phone: 765-494-4290 (4-4290)

Email: [drkelly@purdue.edu](mailto:drkelly@purdue.edu)

Spring Term Office Hours: Via email and Skype

Andreas De Block

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Spring Term Office Hours: Via email and Skype

#### 4. Course Requirements, Policies, and Grading

Grades on papers and exams will be given on the standard 0-100 point grading scale:

100-98:	A+
97-93:	A
92-90:	A-
89-87:	B+
86-83:	B
82-80:	B-
79-77:	C+
76-73:	C
72-70:	C-
69-60:	D
59-0:	F

**Final grades** will be determined as follows:

Participation, in class discussion:	10%
Participation, blog posts:	10%
Prospectus:	20%
Term Paper	60%

#### **Course Blog:**

- There is a (private, password protected) course blog, which you can get to via the course website or directly at this address:  
<http://mindsmadnessculture.blogspot.com>
- The blog will be an informal place for questions or discussions. I will also use it to post links to videos of the class sessions at KU, and links to readings as we move through the semester.
- In addition, every week one student will post a **summary** (This can be narrative or outline) of an assigned reading and raise a **discussion**

**question** or two about it. These can take into account anything that comes up in the KU lectures, too (but don't have to).

- **Blog entries** should be posted by Saturday night at the latest.
- We encourage comments and discussion on the blog in addition to the required posts. As mentioned, the blog is private and password protected, not open to the public. Since only invited authors, i.e. people in the class, can see or contribute to the blog, it can serve as a place to work out and get feedback on ideas without broadcasting them to the entire internet.

## 5. Course Policies

[Many of these are on all of my syllabi; given the abnormal circumstances, they will only apply to this course imperfectly – DRK]

**Readings:** Do them. From a recent book's introduction: "Patience is a primary virtue in philosophy. Genuine understanding is a rare and valuable commodity, not to be obtained on the cheap. One cannot reap philosophy's rewards breathlessly, or by looking for the intellectual equivalents of sound bites. Very large claims are at issue here, claims that bear on understanding some of the matters most important to being human. Understanding requires investing time, close reading, and reflection."

**Class sessions:** We will try to begin on time, and will usually go right up until the end of the class session. Please come on time. Do not pack up your materials until class has been dismissed. If you are unable to make a class session, please email me to let me know.

Classes will be a mix of lecture and discussion focused on the topics raised by the readings. Students are encouraged to ask questions and participate in the conversation – this is usually the best way to get a grip on some very abstract issues and ultimately to understand philosophy. Conversations may get animated and in the course of our frank discussion of ideas we will likely not always agree with each other; but we will all keep the atmosphere respectful and inclusive. The formal attendance policy does not include anything about class participation, but:

*Class participation:* We realize that not everyone is equally outgoing or talkative in class. However, participation in class discussion almost always helps in learning philosophy. So while we highly encourage it, we do not penalize students simply for not speaking up all the time. That said, a consistent record of participation always helps a student's final grade if it is on a borderline at the end of the semester. On the other hand, students who have not been present and engaged throughout the semester will not get the benefit of the

doubt in similar borderline cases, and in particularly egregious cases will have their grades dragged down.

**Laptop computers:** We would prefer that you exercise enough self-restraint to keep from texting for the 75 minutes that class is in session, but since a formal prohibition would be too difficult to enforce, this remains a preference. If we see you consistently texting or listening to your iPod/iPhone during class, it will be reflected poorly in you're the attendance/participation portion of your final grade. Use of laptop computers and iPads during lectures will not be allowed, however.

**Emergencies:** (See end of Syllabus for full Purdue attachment on Emergency Procedures). In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Information about emergencies changes in the course can be gotten by contacting either instructor via email or phone, or by consulting the course website (see above for that information). Purdue's Emergency Procedures Handbook and other important emergency planning information is available online at

[http://www.purdue.edu/emergency\\_preparedness/](http://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness/)

To obtain updates regarding an ongoing emergency, and to sign up for Purdue Alert text messages, go to

[www.purdue.edu/ea](http://www.purdue.edu/ea)

**Plagiarism:** With the advent of the internet, plagiarism has become an increasingly serious problem at universities around the country, particularly in classes like this one, where papers determine a substantial part of the grade.

In order to avoid plagiarizing from a source, both direct quotations *and paraphrases or summaries* of material found in traditional print media or on the internet must be acknowledged. If you have any questions about how this definition will be interpreted, please do not hesitate to discuss the matter with me.

Plagiarism and cheating on exams undermines the integrity of the academic community. When undetected, it gives the perpetrator an unfair advantage over students who are graded on the basis of their own work. In this class we will do our best to detect plagiarism and cheating. Students who are aware of violations by others should bring this to my attention. This is the right thing to do. It is also in your own self-interest.

There will be zero tolerance for plagiarism in this course. Plagiarized papers will receive a 0, the student will automatically fail the course, and their name will be handed given to the university authorities. For more on the Purdue University policy on plagiarism, see the following websites:

[http://www.purdue.edu/univregs/pages/stu\\_conduct/stu\\_regulations.html](http://www.purdue.edu/univregs/pages/stu_conduct/stu_regulations.html)

<http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academicintegritybrochure.php>

With each paper assignment, a handful of students may be selected at random to submit their papers to TurnItIn, an online service that maintains an enormous database of papers that it uses to check for instances of plagiarism.

**External Sources:** Using sources not listed on the syllabus in researching and writing your papers is fine, as long as they are both to the point, and are properly cited. And at all times, when in doubt, *cite your sources!* It is the best way to avoid being accused of plagiarism.

This is probably the best place to make this point, too: Wikipedia can be valuable for getting a very broad grasp of positions and debates, but when it gets into details, especially on philosophic topics, it is very often horrible – sketchy, convoluted, misinformed, and often simply wrong. If you wish to consult online resources, I suggest you use some of the other, much better sites. Most prominent is the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, but others are useful as well:

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

Episteme Links <http://www.epistemelinks.com/Main/MainEncy.aspx>

## 6. Texts

Almost all of the readings will be papers or longer .pdfs that will be posted on the course website. The exception is this book, which should be available at the standard campus bookstores, and can certainly be ordered online.

**Suspicious Minds: How Culture Shapes Madness** by Joel Gold & Ian Gold

## 6. Course Website

Information and comments will often be posted on the website, which can be reached via my homepage:

<http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/>

To go directly to this course's website, the address is:

<http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/KellyMindsMadnessCulturePHIL535Spring2016.html>

You should check it fairly regularly. Also, if there is ever a problem with the website, information will be distributed via the course listserv, which you are automatically included on if you are officially signed up for the course.

## 7. Topics and Readings

**Classes I – V:** These classes (January 11, 18, 25, February 1, 8) will take place before the KU semester begins (and I'll still be on campus for some of them). We'll take this time to read and discuss **Suspicious Minds: How Culture Shapes Madness** by Joel Gold & Ian Gold.

- I. January 11: Intro to the course, go over main themes and logistics, decide what to do about next week
- II. January 18: **NOTE: No official meeting for class – Martin Luther King Jr. Day**
- III. January 25: Gold & Gold Chapters 1 & 2 (1 – 114)
- IV. February 1: Gold & Gold Chapters 3 & 4 (115 - 190)
- V. February 8: Gold & Gold Chapters 5 & 6 (191 – 244)

The rest of the readings will unfold roughly according to the following plan, with adjustments made and specifics locked down as we go. Three dates that are locked down at this point are:

March 14<sup>th</sup>: No class or Skype meeting part (spring break)  
April 4<sup>th</sup>: 2 page prospectus of final paper due  
May 2<sup>nd</sup>: Final papers due

### Class 1: Introduction

- Syllabus
- General intro to the topic.
- Intro texts class 2

### Class 2: What are mental disorders? (1)

- Mental vs. somatic

- Normal vs. abnormal
- Mental disorder/mental disorder
- Based on the following texts.
  - o Text by Wakefield
  - o Text by Murphy (chapter 2)
- Based on movie 'Too ugly for love': <http://bddfoundation.org/too-ugly-for-love/>

Class 3: What are mental disorders? (2)

- The HPC view and its rivals.
- HPC and culture.
- Based on the following texts:
  - o Text by Zachar, Kendler and Craver

Class 4: What is culture?

- Does culture matter?
- Proposals on what culture is.
- Based on the following text:
  - o Text by Ramsey
  - o Text by Geertz
- Based on movie 'The mountain of Mystery':  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZ4Obl-XbtI>

Class 5: Culture, psychology and extended cognition?

- What is embodied cognition? What is embedded cognition?
- Arguments against embodied cognition.
- Based on the following text:
  - o Text by R. Rupert

Class 6: Nativism and anti-nativism in science.

- The social construction-debate.
- The nativism debate.
- Based on the following text:
  - o Text by Mallon & Stich
- Based on movie 'The Aymara Indian':  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3hGy8muVDKs>

Class 7: Feedback session on abstracts and research questions.

Class 8: Are CBSs just like other mental disorder?

- Why syndromes?
- Are CBSs social constructions?
- Based on the following text:
  - o Text by Cooper
  - o Text by Tabb & Schaffner

Class 9: Are all mental disorders CBSs?

- Does culture shape (all) mental disorders?
- Based on movie 'Thin': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AL3FeQU4HjU>

Class 10: Culture and therapy.

- Witchdoctors and psychotherapists.
- Link between etiology and therapy.
- Based on the following etxt:
  - o Text by Torrey
- Based on movies 'Afflictions': will be screened at the institute!

Class 11: DSM and culture.

- Historical changes in DSM and its philosophical assumptions
- Is Western psychiatry imperialist?
- Based on the following text:
  - o Text by Murphy

Class 12: Closing session: The biopsychosocial model and CBS.

- What is the biopsychosocial model?
- CBS and the biopsychosocial model.



## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS SYLLABUS ATTACHMENT

**EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES** are based on a simple concept – if you hear a fire alarm inside, proceed outside. If you hear a siren outside, proceed inside.

- **Indoor Fire Alarms** mean to stop class or research and immediately **evacuate** the building.
  - Proceed to your Emergency Assembly Area away from building doors. **Remain outside** until police, fire, or other emergency response personnel provide additional guidance or tell you it is safe to leave.
- **All Hazards Outdoor Emergency Warning Sirens** mean to immediately seek shelter (**Shelter in Place**) in a safe location within the closest building.
  - “Shelter in place” means seeking immediate shelter inside a building or University residence. This course of action may need to be taken during a tornado, a civil disturbance including a shooting or release of hazardous materials in the outside air. Once safely inside, find out more details about the emergency\*. **Remain in place** until police, fire, or other emergency response personnel provide additional guidance or tell you it is safe to leave.

*\*In both cases, you should seek additional clarifying information by all means possible...Purdue Home page, email alert, TV, radio, etc...review the Purdue Emergency Warning Notification System multi- communication layers at*

[http://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency\\_preparedness/warning-system.html](http://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency_preparedness/warning-system.html)

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES:**

- Review the **Emergency Procedures Guidelines**  
[https://www.purdue.edu/emergency\\_preparedness/flipchart/index.html](https://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness/flipchart/index.html)
- Review the **Building Emergency Plan** (available from the building deputy) for:
  - Evacuation routes, exit points, and emergency assembly area
  - when and how to evacuate the building
  - Shelter in place procedures and locations
  - Additional building specific procedures and requirements.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AWARENESS VIDEOS**

- "Shots Fired on Campus: When Lightning Strikes," is a 20-minute active shooter awareness video that illustrates what to look for and how to prepare and react to this type of incident.

See: <http://www.purdue.edu/securePurdue/news/2010/emergency-preparedness-shots-fired-on-campus-video.cfm> (Link is also located on the EP website)

## **MORE INFORMATION**

Reference the Emergency Preparedness web site for additional information:

[http://www.purdue.edu/emergency\\_preparedness](http://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness)