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Class meets: Thurs @ 9:05
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Illness Narratives

Seminar in Sociology (HTS 4011) (revised September 8)

“Nothing so concentrates experience and clarifies the central conditions of living as serious illness. Illness narratives edify us about how life problems are created, controlled, made meaningful. They also tell us about the way cultural valued and social relations shape how we perceive and monitor our bodies, label and categorize bodily symptoms, interpret complaints in the particular context of our life situation; we express our distress through bodily idioms that are both peculiar to distinctive cultural worlds and constrained by our shared human condition.” -- Arthur Frank, *The Illness Narratives*

Required Texts (available at Engineers Bookstore and Barnes & Noble in Tech Sq.)

1. Arthur Kleinman (1988). *The Illness Narratives*
2. Arthur Frank (2002). *At the Will of the Body*
3. Larie Kaye Abraham, *Mama Might Be Better Off Dead: The Failure of Health Care in Urban America* (1993).
4. Anatole Broyard (1993). *Intoxicated by My Illness.*
5. Anne Fadiman (1997). *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures.*
6. Steven Kroll-Smith and H. Hugh Floyd (1997). *Bodies in Protest: Environmental Illness and the Struggle Over Medical Knowledge.*
7. Dawn Prince-Hughes, ed. (2002). *Aquamarine Blue 5: Personal Stories of College Students with Autism.*
8. Marya Hornbacher (1995). *Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia.*
9. Elizabeth Wurtzel (1995). *Prozac Nation: Young and Depressed in America*
10. James Frey (2005). *A Million Little Pieces.*

Required readings that are not in the texts listed above will be posted to WebCT prior to their due date (for reading and discussion).

Course Requirements (subject to slight changes and adjustments)

1. Active participation in seminar discussions (20%)

This is a seminar, which means that the core activity of the course is discussion. Your active, informed, constructive, consistent participation in discussions is therefore a major course requirement. More than one absence will necessarily affect your grade. More than three absences will result in an automatic failure (F).

2. Leading the seminar (once) (20%)

Each person will be responsible for leading the seminar once during the first half of the semester and a second time during the second half. You may organize the discussion and distribute assignments as you see fit. You will also be responsible for doing some ‘background’ reading on the book and the disease/illness that we are discussing that week and sharing your discoveries and perspective on these discoveries with the seminar.

3. Two critical analyses (4-5 pages) of illness narratives (weeks 4-8; weeks 7-13) (20%)

Each person will be responsible for writing one critical analysis during the first half of the semester and one critical analysis during the second half. You may not write more than one of the critical analyses during the same week that you are responsible for leading discussion. Details regarding these critical analyses will follow.

4. Final research project (40%)

Each person will undertake a research project that will result in a final paper of approximately 15-18 pages length. We will discuss this in greater depth and develop specific guidelines for each project. Each student will present their final research projects during the final (Week 16) meeting of the seminar.

Schedule of Readings

Week 1 (8/24)	Overview and Discussion.
Week 2 (8/31)	<u>Illness Narratives</u> • Arthur Kleinman, <i>The Illness Narratives</i>
Week 3 (9/07)	<u>Narratives of Illness in the Context of the U.S. Health Care System</u> • <i>Being a Patient</i> (12-part series in the <i>New York Times</i>) [WebCT]
Week 4 (9/14)	<u>Chronic Illnesses, Disabilities & the Failure of the U.S. Health Care System for the Urban Poor</u> Larrie Kaye Abraham, <i>Mama Might Be Better Off Dead: The Failure of Health Care in Urban America</i> (1993)
Week 5 (9/21)	<u>Story-telling, Postmodern Illness, and the Remission Society</u> • “Introduction” to <i>The Wounded Storyteller</i> [WebCT]

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arthur Frank, <i>At the Will of the Body</i>
<p>Week 6 (9/28)</p> <p>Samir will lead the seminar.</p>	<p><u>Narratives of Autism</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dawn Prince-Hughes, ed., <i>Aquamarine Blue 5: Personal Stories of College Students with Autism</i> • Joyce Davidson, “‘More Labels Than a Jam Jar ...’: The Gendered Dynamics of Diagnosis for Girls and Women with Autism” [WebCT]
<p>Week 7 (10/5)</p> <p>Lee will lead the seminar.</p>	<p><u>Narratives of Prostate Cancer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anatole Broyard, <i>Intoxicated by My Illness</i> • Alison Chapple and Sue Ziebland. 2002. Prostate Cancer: Embodied Experience and Perceptions of Masculinity. <i>Sociology of Health and Illness</i> 24 (6):820-841. [WebCT]
<p>Week 8 (10/12)</p> <p>Mary will lead the seminar.</p>	<p><u>Narratives of Anorexia and the Construction of Collective Identities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marya Hornbacher, <i>Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia</i> • pro-anorexia websites
<p>Week 9 (10/19)</p>	<p><u>Eating Disorders in Global Perspective</u> [all articles on WebCT]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eileen P. Anderson-Fye. 2005. "A 'Coca-Cola' Shape: Cultural Change, Body Image, and Eating Disorders in San Andres, Belize." <i>Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry</i> 28:561-596. • Anne Becker. 2005. "Television, Disordered Eating, and Young Women in Fiji: Negotiating Body Image and Identity During Rapid Social Change." <i>Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry</i> 28:533-560. • Rebecca Lester. 2005. "Commentary: Eating Disorders and the Problem of 'Culture' in Acculturation." <i>Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry</i> 28:607-616. • Roland Littlewood. 2005. "Commentary: Globalization, Culture, Body Image, and Eating Disorders." <i>Culture, Medicine, and</i>

	<p><i>Psychiatry</i> 28:597-602.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kathleen Pike and Amy Borovoy. 2005. "The Rise of Eating Disorders in Japan: Issues of Culture and Limitations of the Model of 'Westernization'." <i>Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry</i> 28:493-532.
<p>Week 10 (10/26)</p> <p>Jennifer will lead the seminar.</p>	<p><u>Cultural Collisions and Contestations over the Meaning of Illness</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anne Fadiman, <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures</i> • Irving Zola. 1966. "Culture and Symptoms: An Analysis of Patients' Presenting Complaints." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 31:615-630. [WebCT]
<p>Week 11 (11/02)</p> <p>Adair will lead the seminar.</p>	<p><u>Contested Illnesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steven Kroll-Smith and H. Hugh Floyd, <i>Bodies in Protest: Environmental Illness and the Struggle Over Medical Knowledge</i>
<p>Week 12 (11/09)</p> <p>Jacqueline will lead the seminar.</p>	<p><u>Culture and Depression in the New Age of Psychopharmacology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elizabeth Wurtzel, <i>Prozac Nation: Young and Depressed in America</i> • Nathan Greenslit. 2005. "Depression and Consumption: Psychopharmaceuticals, Branding, and New Identity Practices." <i>Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry</i> 29:477-501. [WebCT]
<p>Week 13 (11/16)</p>	<p><u>Illness Narratives and the Politics of Authenticity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James Frey, <i>A Million Little Pieces</i> • The Smoking Gun, "A Million Little Lies" (January 8, 2006) www.thesmokinggun.com/archive/0104061jamesfrey1.html
<p>Week 14 (11/23)</p>	<p>NO CLASS--THANKSGIVING</p>

Week 15 (11/30)	Meet individually with Professor Klawiter to discuss progress on final research projects.
Week 16 (12/07)	Presentation of Final Projects.
Finals Week	Final Papers due Monday (12/11) by noon.

A Note on Courtesy and Respect. I expect all of us to treat each other with courtesy and respect at all times. This is meant to promote, not inhibit, lively discussion.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities (including but not limited to visual, hearing, and mobility impairments, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, chronic illness, cerebral palsy, etc.) have a right to all necessary and appropriate accommodations. To ensure timely and appropriate accommodations, please contact the coordinator of ADAPTS (Accessible Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students) as soon as possible. ADAPTS is located in the Smithgall Student Services Building; phone 404-894-9411 (voice) or 404-894-3344 (voice/TDD).

Honor Code: Students in this class will be expected to abide by the Georgia Tech Honor Code and avoid any instance of academic misconduct, including but not limited to the substitution of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another individual or individuals; false claims of performance or work submitted by the student; possessing, using, or exchanging *improperly* acquired written or verbal information in preparation for, or in writing, an exam or paper. Obviously, wandering eyes, cheat sheets, text-messaging, etc. are violations of the honor code. I have zero tolerance for cheating and zero interest in debating what you did or did not do. If I suspect cheating, I will report it to the Office of the Dean of Students. If you cheat on a quiz, you will receive an F and will not be allowed to take future quizzes. If you cheat on a paper, midterm, or final you will receive an F and, depending on the seriousness of the violation, you will fail the course. If you have any questions whatsoever, please consult with me and read the Honor Code, which is available at: www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/Policy/code.in.sections.htm#AHC .