

Syllabus: Reading Madness (ENGL 28704, ARTH 28304, ARTV 28704): Fall 2015

Note: this syllabus is provisional. It will be trimmed, augmented, or modified from time to time.

Instructor: W. J. T. Mitchell, Office: Wieboldt 203; Hours: Tuesdays 2-3:30, and by appointment.

JRL (Regenstein Library) Room 523, Mondays and Wednesdays 1:30-2:50

Texts: most will be on the course website as PDFs under "Course Material" (CM). Full length books available for download on Kindle will be indicated with a "K" (e.g., Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (K). Kindle editions are, in general, much cheaper.

The following texts will be available at the bookstore:

Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*. Vintage Paperback. Highly recommended that you read this before the beginning of the term.
Elyn Saks, *The Center Cannot Hold*. Hatchette Books
Kay Jamison, *An Unquiet Mind*. Hatchette Books

Course requirements:

1. Final paper, 15 pages, due December 9.
2. Oral report on your final paper during tenth week, to be presented either on Monday 11/30 or Wednesday 12/2.
3. Short response papers on the readings, opening the discussion with questions and issues for debate. These texts, no more than a page or two, are to be uploaded to the Discussion Board on the course website the day before the class discussion.
4. Comparing Notes: See course website for instructions.
5. Mad Proverbs and Aphorisms: We will assemble a commonplace book of famous quotations and sayings about madness. Classic example: "Insanity in individuals is somewhat rare—but in groups, parties, nations, and epochs, it is the rule." --Nietzsche, "The Natural History of Morals." Each class member will be expected to find and comment on at least one aphorism of this sort.
6. Depending on the interest of the class, a weekly evening session of screenings of selected films may be arranged. See the list of films for the November 23rd session for some possibilities.
7. Attendance at all classes is strictly required. Unexcused absences will result in grade reduction.

Week 1: Madness as Script and Spectacle

Monday 9/28: Seeing/Hearing Madness. A personal case history. Browse Gabriel Mitchell's Homepage, http://www.philmworx.com/philmworx.com/Welcome_Contact.html With special attention to his films, "Crazy Talk" and "Grid Theory." Also pay a visit to the Antony Gormley sculpture, *Infinite Cube* at the Smart Museum, and look at the 4 minute Vimeo film about it: <https://vimeo.com/album/3057212/video/119265545>. This should be done before the first class.

Wednesday 9/30: Foucault, Ch. 1 ("Stultifera Navis") and Chapter 9 ("The Birth of the Asylum") from *Madness and Civilization*. Supplementary: Freud, "Introduction" to *Mass Psychology and Analysis of the 'I'*. in *Mass Psychology and Other Writings*, (K) trans J.A. Underwood (Penguin Books); *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (K). "The Psychological Apparatus," ch. 1.

Week 2: Language and/of Madness:

Monday 10/5: Main readings: Chapters 8 and 9 of *Madness and Civilization* "The New Division," and "The Birth of the Asylum"; also Foucault, "Mad Language" in *Language, Madness, and Desire (CM)* "Poetic Madness," from *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics (CM)*. Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life (K)*, especially Ch. V "Slips of the Tongue."; James Wilce, "Madness and Language" available online at <http://www2.nau.edu/~jmw22/cv/LanguageMadnessDurantiEd2004%20copy.pdf>. Also: Roland Barthes on Saussure and Chomsky; Freud, "The Psychoanalytic Technique," from *An Outline of Psychoanalysis (K)*. Andre Breton on automatic writing, with a possible excursion into the "paranoid method" of the surrealists. Logic, Grammar, Rhetoric, Poetics. Talking cures and speech disorders. The many names of madness. Film excerpt from *Asylum* (d. Peter Robinson, 1972)

Wednesday 10/7: Guest Lecture by psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, Dr. Bernard Rubin: A medical and literary map of madness.

Week 3: Poetic Madness I: Love, Prophecy, Inspiration, Poetry, Dreaming

Monday 10/12: Plato, *Phaedrus*; Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*. Freud, excerpts on condensation and displacement from *The Interpretation of Dreams (K)*.

Wednesday 10/14: Romanticism and Madness: William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (read Copy D, 1795, the Rosenwald-Library of Congress version, online in The Blake Archive: <http://www.blakearchive.org/blake/main.html?java=no>); John Clare, selected poems; Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy (K)* trans. Shaun Whiteside. Nietzsche's Dionysian letters.

Week 4: Poetic Madness II: Suffering, Silence, and Expression

Monday 10/19: John Wilkinson lecture on John Wieners and madness in contemporary poetry

Wednesday 10/21: Robert Lowell, "Skunk Hour," (listen to his reading on YouTube); Sylvia Plath, selections from *Ariel*. Other poems/poets may be proposed by members of the class for presentation and close reading, e.g., Allen Ginsberg, *Howl*, Ann Sexton, etc.

Week 5: Narrative I: Non-Fiction

Monday 10/26: Autobiography: William Styron, *Darkness Visible (K)* (depression); Elyn Saks, *The Center Cannot Hold (K)* (schizophrenia); Kay Jamison, *An Unquiet Mind* (bipolar; manic depressive).

Wednesday 10/28: Case History: Freud, *A Case of Hysteria (Dora) (K)*

Week 6: Narrative II: Fiction

Monday 11/2: Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground (K)*; excerpts from Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*. Background reading: Franz Fanon, "The Black Man and Psychopathology," Ch. 6 of *Black Skin, White Masks*.

Wednesday 11/4:); Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper (K)* or Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway (K)*

Week 7: Drama I: Ancient and Early Modern: The Exceptional Individual and the State of Exception

Monday, 11/9: Euripides, *Heracles* and *Bacchantes*; Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* (Cassandra and prophecy).

Wednesday, 11/11: "Madness in great ones must not unwatched go." -- Claudius. Madness, Method, and Sovereignty: Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (is his madness "just an act"?) and *King Lear* (senility, dementia, and the counsel of the Fool). A possible detour into the madness of King George III.

Thursday, 11/12: Mitchell lecture on Gormley's *Infinite Cube*, Cochrane Woods Art Center, Room 157, 6 PM, followed by a visit to the Cube in the Smart Museum

Week 8: Drama II: Modern Theater and Performance

Monday, 11/16: Peter Weiss, *Marat/Sade*; David Auburn, *Proof* (now also a film); Sarah Kane, *4:48 Psychosis*; Buchner, *Woyzeck*, trans. Mueller.

Wednesday, 11/18: Antonin Artaud, excerpts from *The Theater and Its Double*, esp. "The Theater and the Plague"; and *Jet of Blood*. Alternative: Alan Bennett, *The Madness of King George*.

Week 9: Media and Visual Culture: Movies, Television, & Comics

Monday, 11/23: A review session on the stuff you already know about, want to talk about, or have been sneaking off to see during the term. Examples: *Mad Magazine* (how can madness be put to work as satire?); *Mad Men* (what does advertising have to do with madness?) *A Beautiful Mind* (what does mathematics have to do with madness); *A Page of Madness* (the greatest film ever made about madness); *Titicut Follies* (documentary expose of the state mental hospital); *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (is it worse to be classified as insane or as a criminal?); *Shutter Island* (see it next to *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*); *Spellbound* (reversing the gender roles of psychoanalyst and patient); *Shock Corridor* (how mental hospitals drive people mad); *The Snake Pit*, *The Manchurian Candidate* (brainwashing and the Cold War as psychosis). (You should try to watch these films before and during the course and be prepared to discuss them during this week).

Wednesday, 11/25: no class: Thanksgiving break

Week 10: Reports on term projects: 10 minute oral presentations, followed by 5 minutes of discussion.

Monday, 11/30: Oral Reports

Wednesday, 12/2: Oral Reports

Final Papers due: Wednesday, December 9