

OT 300
**Occupational Expressions of Diverse Identities and Lifestyles:
The Lifeworlds of Individuals and Groups in Cultural Perspective**

Instructor: Kevin P. Groark, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, *Division of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy*
Clinical Research Associate, *New Center for Psychoanalysis*

Email: groark@usc.edu • **Phone:** (310) 773-3390

Class Schedule: T & TH 3:30 – 4:50 (SOS B-48)

Office Hours: TH 2-3, or by appointment (Location TBA)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Occupational science—as a basic science that studies the form, function, and significance of “meaningful activity” in our lives—probes the cultural, social, and individual aspects of lifeworlds both within and outside of the mainstream. A basic tenet of the field holds that individuals create and manage their identities and self-definitions through participation in personally and socially meaningful activities. However, in a complex and pluralistic society such as our own, “meaningful engagements” may vary significantly across cultural groups and lifestyles, taking forms that do not readily conform to one’s own commonsense expectations. Such breaches of taken-for-granted frames of reference challenge all parties: The “outsider” must learn to appreciate novel forms of meaning and occupational expression, while the “insider” must contend with problems of social misunderstanding, stigma, and lack of acceptance. These problems are especially acute during times of distress, when assumptions concerning the “normal” throw cultural, social, and lifestyle differences into high relief.

In this course, we will examine the interrelationship among individuals, their cultural expressions, social ideologies, occupational engagements, and lifestyles. In particular, we will emphasize moments of disjuncture and interruption, when physical or mental disorder threatens the delicate equilibrium between the person, the body, and everyday routines and activities, necessitating a restructuring of the self, the social, and the network of meanings in which both are embedded. We will focus on six topical themes during the semester:

- 1) Culture, meaning, and occupation
- 2) Cultural diversity and the illness experience
- 3) Disability and adaptation
- 4) Veterans, war trauma, and reintegration
- 5) Disorders of the brain-bind (autism & schizophrenia) and vocation
- 6) Aging and wellness

Readings consist of vivid book-length ethnographic accounts and autobiographical narratives that immerse the reader in distinct experiential worlds, exemplifying the challenges of understanding and conceptualizing the contours of life in different communities and/or cultural groups. Each thematic unit is also accompanied by a film or documentary that complements the reading materials and serves to bring the issues to life. Through these rich and varied materials, we will come to better understand the complex relationship between participation in meaningful activities and occupations that help create identity and a sense of place in the situated cultural world of the individual and group. By the end of the course, the student will have gained an awareness of the usefulness of viewing diverse identities and lifestyles through the lens of occupational science, and will have acquired a set of conceptual tools for understanding the interpenetration of cultural frames of meaning and the pursuit of life structured around meaningful occupational engagements.

Prerequisites—No Prerequisites. This course is open to any and all interested students.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Discussion & Active Participation—Being able to effectively engage in spontaneous discussion and debate is a competency all students must develop, and the classroom is the arena in which you can polish your ability to articulate complex ideas. Participation in class discussion is, therefore, a requirement. To the extent that students miss class, they decrease their opportunities to practice this skill. Non-attendance, in general, unless excused for reason of illness or emergency, results in a 1 point penalty in the participation grade per class session missed. However, each student will be allowed a single unexcused absence over the course of the semester. Students are expected to carefully read all required course readings prior to each session (with the exception of the first session) so as to facilitate the ability to intelligently participate in group discussion. Prior to each session, students should be prepared to discuss on an in-depth basis each of the assigned readings. Following each class, each student will receive a class participation grade based on his or her degree of contribution to the discussion.

Preparation Outlines—All students are expected to come to class with brief written notes for each reading to be discussed that day. The goal of these outlines is to refresh your memory about the reading and its themes, providing a springboard for discussion. These will also be helpful when you are writing your reflective papers on each unit. A few things to keep in mind as you write the outlines

- 1) **Key Themes:** Based on your reading, what strikes you as the key themes of the reading? Is there a central argument; and what is it? Make notes or indicate specific passages that illustrate these points. List and summarize each theme in 2 or 3 sentences.
- 2) **Personal Experience:** Does anything in the reading resonate with your own experience? How? Did anything in the reading elicit a strong emotional reaction (either positive or negative) from you? What was it, and why?
- 3) **Relation to OS/OT:** How might these ideas relate to the concerns of OS/OT? In what ways do culture or lifestyle affect occupation, activities, and the meanings attributed to these?
- 4) **Relation to Other Readings:** How do the readings relate to other course material?

These notes will be turned in and marked as “acceptable/unacceptable” at the beginning of each class meeting. If you are not able to attend a seminar meeting, you can email me your reading notes for credit (however, you will not receive discussion credit).

Discussion Facilitation—Each of you will be asked to lead at least one class discussion. Discussion leaders for the readings will be determined during the first meeting. The purpose of this “facilitation” is not to summarize the readings—the expectation is that everyone has done the readings. You should come to seminar prepared to lead discussion, using your “written outlines” as a springboard for discussion, with particular emphasis on the issues the reading raised for you. Your written outline is not a “checklist” of required topics, but rather, a series of possible ways to engage with novel interdisciplinary perspectives. You should also come with a list of questions to guide discussion. Remember, *your job is not to be an expert; your role as facilitator is to help open up lines of discussion that we will collectively explore and elaborate.* Additional guidance in preparing these discussions is available in office hours, or by appointment. An additional reading or two may be suggested to aid in preparation.

Reflection Papers—For each of the five main thematic units of the class, you will complete a “reflection paper.” This paper will be approximately 4-5 pages in length, and must use APA style for all references (when appropriate). The goal of the paper is to synthesize your thoughts about the readings and media presentations for each unit.

- These papers will follow the basic outline of the preparation outline notes, but will be executed in greater detail and with more careful thought and reflection.
- The goal is to synthesize the information and communicate the new understandings and appreciations you have gained from the materials.
- Papers are due by 10pm on the dates indicated in the syllabus—please pay attention to these.
- Papers can be turned in late, but they will incur a 20% penalty (or 1 point) for each week the paper is overdue.
- You can bring your paper to class, or email it to me (groark@usc.edu)

COURSE GRADING AND EVALUATION

Your course grade is based on a 100 point scale. Point allocation is outlined below:

Discussion: 30% (1 point/class)
Preparation Outlines: 15% (.5 points each; marked as acceptable or unacceptable)
Facilitation (5%)
Five Reflection Papers: 50% (10 points each)

Total: 100% (100/100 points)

READINGS

Required Texts (Books):

- 1) Becker, Gay. 1999. Disrupted Lives: How People Create Meaning in a Chaotic World. University of California Press. (ISBN: 0520209141; \$26.95 Amazon.com)
- 2) Fadiman, Ann. 1998. The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures. Farrar, Staus and Giroux.. (ISBN: 0374525641; \$10.20 Amazon.com)
- 3) Shay, Jonathan. 2003. Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming. Scriber: New York. (ISBN: 074321157X; \$11.70 Amazon.com)
- 4) Murphy, Robert F. 2001. The Body Silent: The Different World of the Disabled. W.W. Norton & Co.: New York. (ISBN: 0393320421; \$11.18 Amazon.com)
- 5) Myerhoff, Barbara. 1978. Number Our Days: A Triumph of Continuity and Culture Among Jewish Old Peope in an Urban Ghetto. Touchstone Book: New York (ISBN: 0671254308; \$12.60 Amazon.com)

Optional Texts (Books):

Saks, Elyn. 2008. The Center Cannot Hold: My Journey Through Madness. Hyperion: New York. (ISBN: 1401309445; \$10.17 Amazon.com)

Articles and Book Chapters

Journal articles marked "Download from Web" are to be downloaded from the source journals through your USC account. You are responsible for learning how to access and download these online materials (reference librarians can assist you if you do not know how to use the library portals). Readings marked "Provided by Instructor" can be downloaded in PDF format via the included link. All books should be purchased in advance through Amazon.com or the USC bookstore. Be sure to purchase these books during the first week of class.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS TOPICS AND READINGS

UNIT I: INTRODUCTION TO CULTURE THEORY

Class 1.1 (Tuesday 8/25) – Introduction to Course and Organization

Class 1.2 (Thursday 8/27) – The Challenge of Cultural Diversity: Perspectives from OS/OT

Bonder, Bette R. et al. 2004. Culture Emergent in Occupation. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* 58(2):159-168. *(Download from Web)*

Iwama, Michael. 2003. Toward Culturally Relevant Epistemologies in Occupational Therapy. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* 57(5):582-588. *(Download from Web)*

Class 2.1 (Tuesday 9/1) – Culture Defined I: Models and Schema Theory

Strauss, Claudia and Naomi Quinn. 1997. *A Cognitive Theory of Cultural Meaning*. Cambridge University Press: New York. (Chs. 4-5, pp. 85-134) *(Provided by Instructor)*

Class 2.2 (Thursday 9/3) - Culture Defined II: So, What is It?

D'Andrade 1984. Cultural Meaning Systems. Pp. 88-119 in *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion* (Richard A. Schweder and Robert A. Levine, eds). *(Provided by Instructor)*

UNIT II: CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND OCCUPATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Class 3.1 (Tuesday 9/8) - Cultural Variations in “Meaningful” Occupational Engagement: “Ikigai” in Japan I

Mathews, Gordon. 1996. The Stuff of Dreams: Ikigai and “The Japanese Self”. *Ethos* 24(4):718-747. *(Download from Web)*

Class 3.2 (Thursday 9/10) – Cultural Variations in “Meaningful” Occupational Engagement: “Ikigai” in Japan II

Hoffman, Diane. 2000. Individualism and Individuality in American and Japanese Early Education: A Review and Critique. *American Journal of Education* 108:300-317. *(Download from Web)*

Class 4.1 (Tuesday 9/15) - Narrative and the Construction of Meaning I

Becker, Gay. 1997. *Disrupted Lives: How People Create Meaning in a Chaotic World* (Chs. 2-5, 7) *(Provided by Instructor)*

Class 4.2 (Thursday 9/17) - Narrative and the Construction of Meaning I

Becker, Gay. 1997. *Disrupted Lives: How People Create Meaning in a Chaotic World* (Chs. 8, 10, 11). *(Provided by Instructor)*

UNIT III: CULTURE AND THE ILLNESS EXPERIENCE

Class 5.1 (Tuesday 9/22)

- Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, Chs. 1- 7 (pp. 1-92)
- Explore PBS website: <http://www.pbs.org/splithorn/story.html>
- In Class Video: *The Split Horn: Life of a Hmong Shaman in America*

Class 5.2 (Thursday 9/24)

- Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, Chs. 8-10 (pp. 92-139)
- In Class Video: *Excerpts of Hmong Shamanic Curing*

Class 6.1 (Tuesday 9/29)

- Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, Chs. 11-15 (pp. 140-224)
- In Class Video: *Hmong in America*

Class 6.2 (Thursday 10/1)

- Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, Chs. 16-19 (pp. 225-287)

UNIT IV: DISABILITY AND ADAPTATION

Class 7.1 (Tuesday 10/6)

- Murphy, *The Body Silent*, Chs. 1-3 (pp. 1-82)
- In Class Video: *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*

— Reflection Paper #1 Due Today (Cultural Diversity / Culture and Illness Experience) —

Class 7.2 (Thursday 10/8)

- Murphy, *The Body Silent*, Chs. 4-6 (pp. 85-136)

Class 8.1 (Tuesday 10/13)

- Murphy, The Body Silent, Chs. 6-7 (pp. 137-194)
- In Class Video: *Murderball*

Class 8.2 (Thursday 10/15)

- Murphy, The Body Silent, Chs. 8-9 (pp. 195-231)

UNIT V: WARRIOR CULTURE, WAR TRAUMA, AND REINTEGRATION

Class 9.1 (Tuesday 10/20)

- Shay, Odysseus in America, Chs. 1-6 (pp. 1-60)
- In Class Video: *Body of War (Part I)*

— Reflection Paper #2 Due Today (Disability and Adaptation) —

Class 9.2 (Thursday 10/22)

- Shay, Odysseus in America, Chs. 7-10 (pp. 61-95)
- In Class Video Clips of Shell Shocked Soldiers and US Army “Battlemind” Training

Class 10.1 (Tuesday 10/27)

- Shay, Odysseus in America, Chs. 11-15 (pp. 96-146)
- In Class Video: *Body of War (Part II)*

Class 10.2 (Thursday 10/29)

- Shay, Odysseus in America, Chs. 16-18 (pp. 149-201)

Class 11.1 (Tuesday 11/3)

- Shay, Odysseus in America, Chs. 19-22 (pp. 205-253)

UNIT VI: DISORDERS OF THE BRAIN-MIND AND VOCATION

Class 11.2 (Thursday 11/5)

- Grandin, Selections from: Thinking in Pictures and Other Reports from My Life With Autism. (*Provided by Instructor*)
- In Class Video: *Temple Grandin - The Woman Who Thinks Like a Cow*

— Reflection Paper #3 Due Today (War Trauma and Reintegration) —

Class 12.1 (Tuesday 11/10)

- Saks, Excerpts from “The Center Cannot Hold” (Provided by Instructor)
- In Class Video: *The Center Cannot Hold – My Journey Through Madness* (University Lecture)

Class 12.2 (Thursday 11/12)

- Saks, Excerpts from “The Center Cannot Hold” (Provided by Instructor)
- Listen to NPR Interview with Elyn Saks in Preparation for today (Link Provided by Instructor)
- Discussion of Autism and Schizophrenia Materials

UNIT VII: SENESCENCE – AGING IN COMMUNITY / RELIGION

Class 13.1 (Tuesday 11/17)

- Myerhoff, Number Our Days, Chs. 1-2 (pp. 1-78)

— Reflection Paper #4 Due Today (Disorders of the Brain-Mind) —

Class 13.2 (Thursday 11/19)

- Myerhoff, Number Our Days, Ch. 3 (pp. 79-112)
- In Class Video: *Number Our Days*

Class 14.1 (Tuesday 11/24)

- Myerhoff, Number Our Days, Ch. 4 (pp. 113-152)

Class 14.2 (Thursday 11/26)—No Class (Thanksgiving Holiday)

Class 15.1 (Tuesday 12/1)

- Myerhoff, Number Our Days, Ch. 5 (pp. 153-194)

Class 15.2 (Thursday 12/3)

- Myerhoff, Number Our Days, Ch. 6 (pp. 195-231)
- Course Evaluations

FINAL EXAM (T 12/15 2-4pm) — FINAL DUE DATE!

- Reflection Paper #5 Due Today (Aging in Community / Religion) —
- Absolutely no late or make-up materials accepted after 4pm today —

University Policies on Disability and Academic Integrity

Statement for Students with Disabilities—Any student requesting academic accommodations based on disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from the DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Statement on Academic Integrity—USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by the instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.
